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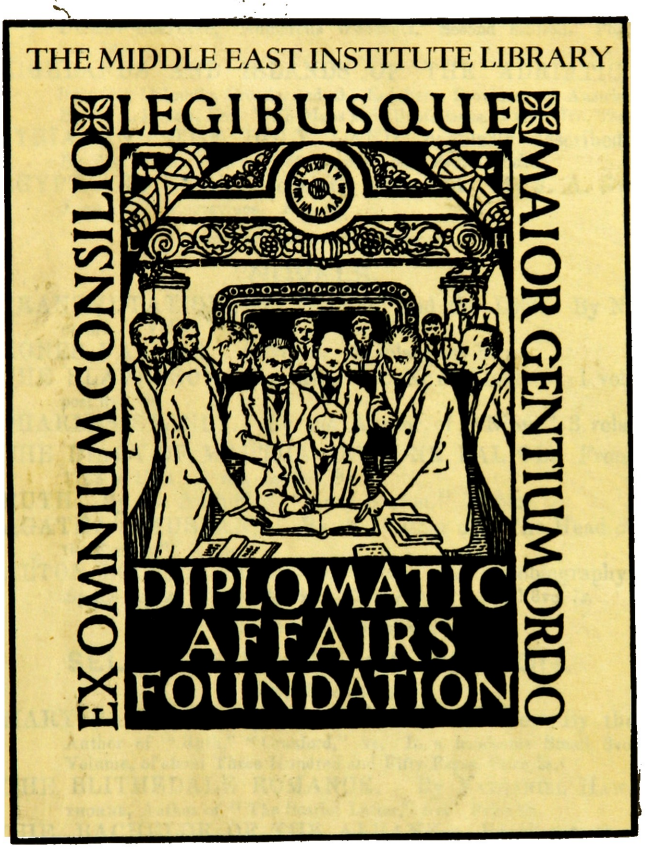

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LONDON:
BRADBURY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.

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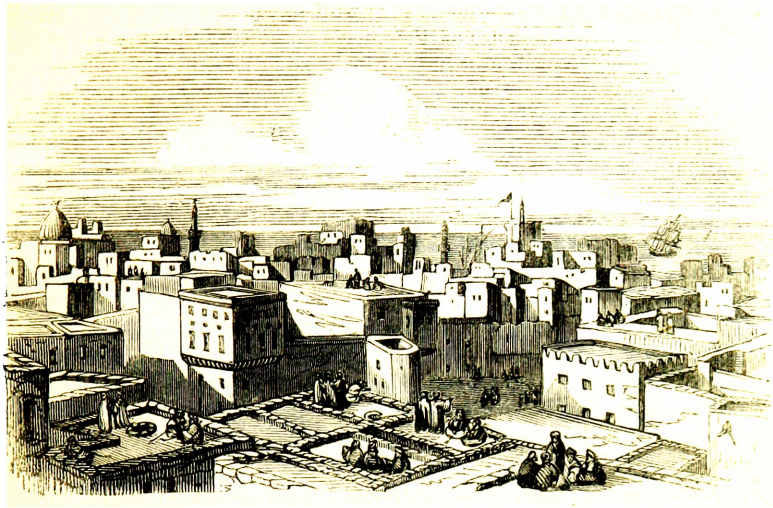


Alexandria—Terrace Roofs.

EGYPT AND NUBIA.

CHAPTER I.

HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF EGYPT—ARRIVAL AT ALEXANDRIA.

FROM time immemorial Egypt has been an object of extreme curiosity to the rest of the world. The number of travellers who have explored and described it is accordingly immense; yet each successive visitor feels as though he were approaching a new scene, a country of undelineated beauties, the very home and abiding-place of all that is most strange and mysterious in human society, and in the monuments of past ages. Of these feelings the roots lie scattered far and wide over the face of history and tradition. Almost the dawn of Scripture light breaks upon the rocks and sands of this wonderful valley, whose vast river, rolling from the unknown regions of Central Africa, diffuses fertility wherever it flows, and has, through all ages, inspired those subsisting on its bounty with feelings closely akin to piety and religion. In Egypt, Abraham, a Bedouin from Mesopotamia, sojourned as a stranger, when his wife Sarah was taken from him to be transferred to the king's harem. Here, during four hundred and thirty

years, the Beni-Israël, or Children of Israel, served the Pharaohs, and grew up, despite their captivity, into a great nation. From the banks of the Nile they set out on that marvellous pilgrimage to Sinaï and Zion, those two rocky pinnacles whence the awful splendours of the law, and the mild and beneficent radiance of the Gospel, beamed forth upon mankind. Tradition, faithful apparently in this instance to its trust, still points out the track they pursued, conducting the traveller towards the Red Sea, through the Valley of the Wanderings.

But that which most hallows and endears Egypt to us, is the knowledge that its soil received the impress of the foot of Christ, who fled thither when a child to escape the cruelty of Herod. The tree under whose thick and spreading foliage the Holy Family is believed to have sheltered itself from the noon-day sun, is shown to the traveller, shattered and time-worn, but still verdant, its trunk and lower boughs quaintly carved all over with the names of Christian pilgrims.

The religion of the ancient inhabitants of Egypt, shrouded in symbol and obscurity, is still an unsolved problem to the learned, though many of its temples are yet standing almost entire, and have, painted or sculptured on their walls, innumerable representations of their characteristic rites and ceremonies. These venerable edifices have many of them survived the vicissitudes of perhaps four thousand years. Their massive proportions and primæval simplicity carry us back almost to the birth of society. What a cloud of doubts and conjectures rests upon the Pyramids! What vague hopes and expectations are excited by the hieroglyphics impressed on the countenance as it were of ancient Egypt, not to reveal, but hide, what it thought and did. Who has not heard of its spacious though gloomy fanes excavated in rocks beneath the earth, and of those gorgeous subterranean palaces, in many of which the dust of its ancient kings still reposes in peace, though some have been opened and rifled by the curiosity of modern times. Even the sepulchre of Osiris still exists, and may yet be discovered in the sacred Island of Philæ, situate beyond the borders of Egypt, nearly beneath the Tropic, where the subjects of the Pharaohs came in contact with the black races of the interior.

Nor are the associations of civil history less rife in this extraordinary land. The Valley of the Nile constituted the extreme limits of Persian conquest towards the south-west. Here Alexander the Macedonian and his successors fought and founded a new empire, overthrown a few centuries later by the legions of Rome, which, in their turn, yielded up the palm of victory to the fanatical and victorious Arabs. On the shores of Egypt, moreover, many a stern crusader was gathered to his fathers; and in our own days, the fleets and armies of England have reaped abundant laurels on its waves and sands. Besides, throughout the whole civilised world, speculation is busy conjecturing the nature of the next change in its destiny, a change obviously fast approaching, and fraught with paramount interest to Great Britain.

The satisfaction with which I approached the shores of Egypt, over which, as I have said, history, both ancient and modern, has cast so extraordinary a degree of glory, was greatly heightened by a feeling of security; it having

been more than once doubtful, during the voyage from Leghorn, whether we should ever arrive or not, so boisterous and contrary were the winds, and so tempestuous was the sea. On the preceding day, the level sandy coast of Africa, west of the Arab's Tower, had been for a short time visible. It was found, however, that we had made the land much too far west, and the wind proving contrary, we again put out to sea, and worked nearly in the teeth of the weather towards Alexandria. In the course of the night the sailors, with their glasses, often caught glimpses of the coast, but it did not become visible to my unpractised eye until some time after dawn, when, as the sun rose behind the city, every eminence and inequality in the line of the horizon appeared, relieved against the pure saffron sky. The first object we discovered was the Pasha's palace, on the point of the Cape of Figs; the next Pompey's Pillar; and then the windmills and the shipping. The land itself was so low, that we seemed to descend to it from the water. For some time before the shore becomes visible, the colour of the sea, by the intermixture of the waters and mud of the Nile, changes from blue to a dirty green, from which some travellers have inferred that the line of the coast is continually gaining upon the sea, though, on account of its physical conformation, it seems that no further enlargement of Egypt can be effected by the agency of the river.*

It has been said that the uniformity of the shore is so great, that there are extremely few points sufficiently individualised to serve as landmarks to the mariner, for which reason shipwrecks are frequent. Nevertheless, in autumn, the proximity of the coast before it becomes visible is indicated by the colour of the water. At that season of the year, the Nile pours so vast a volume into the sea that it is almost blanched by the mud held in suspension. The gradual deposition of this mud in the course of ages has formed the Delta, and given rise to those bars which obstruct the entrance of the river. The same cause diminishes every day the depth of the sea near the shore, and it is supposed may contribute, in time, to the increase of the dry land. But although this, up to a certain point, may be the case, it seems reasonable to infer that the sea at low Nile counteracts its influence. The sites of many large cities and celebrated temples on the shore are at present overflowed. Lakes have always existed; but their dimensions have been extended. Those of Menzaleh and Bourlos now communicate with the sea, and their waves roll over the roofs of several towns, which, in some instances, have formed islands. It may be calculated, therefore, that the equilibrium of the waters of the sea and those of the Nile is different from what it was formerly.†

On drawing near the land, numerous sea-mews, fishing-eagles, and other aquatic birds, were observed skimming along, or settling upon, the waves. The wind had sunk into a light breeze, the sky was cloudless, the sun, warm as in our northern latitudes during summer, cast a veil of beauty over sea and land; and my mingled feelings of thankfulness, curiosity, and joy, strongly disposed me to invest every object around with golden hues. In itself, however, the scene was highly interesting: pillars, obelisks, forts,

* Travels in the Valley of the Nile.

† Duc de Raguse.

palaces, with other edifices of use or luxury, white, and sparkling in the sun, lining the shore, and partly beheld through a forest of masts; merchant-vessels and ships of war, with outspread sails and colours flying, entering or quitting the port; and numerous jerms, feluccas, and pilot-boats, scudding, like huge sea-fowl, with large white sails, along the waves. The Bay of Aboukir, rendered memorable by the battle of the Nile, was distinctly visible on our left; and the small sandy eminences extending westward to the ancient Necropolis, were surmounted by a number of windmills of a peculiar construction, and not unpicturesque aspect.

Presently the Arab pilots, dressed in the Turkish costume, which is much more convenient than the long loose dress of the Egyptian for those engaged in any active occupation, came on board, and began to direct our movements. A recent traveller* was greeted even before landing with signs of the most prevalent malady of Egypt. I picked up a pilot, he says, blind of one eye, as were all the crew, except an old man who had lost both. He very deliberately squatted himself, cross-legged, upon the poop, and commenced smoking his long pipe, which he scarcely ever removed from his lips till we anchored. He seemed, however, to understand his business very well, and was the first of his profession we had met whose opening inquiry was not after the rum-bottle. It took us about two hours and a half to make our way in; the entrance, winding between shoals and sunken rocks, being peculiarly difficult and dangerous. As soon as we had entered, numerous boats, filled with Arabs, Turks, and dirty Italians, came crowding alongside; and when the anchor was cast, the whole of this promiscuous rabble, motley in complexion as in garb, poured upon the deck, chattering, bargaining, wrangling, like a herd of Jews in 'Change Alley. The sun, glowing in a cloudless sky, poured its warm rays upon the deck. Around, the quivering and glittering waters flowed in channels of greater or less dimensions, between the ships of war which lay motionless on the surface, while numerous small boats passed incessantly to and fro between the shipping and the quays.

Diamond Rock. Pharos in the distance.

Late in the afternoon we landed at one of the wharfs near the custom-house, and met a company of the troops in undress, who all looked rather dirty, and walked like so many turkeys in long grass. Their

* Wilde.

dress, which is of white cotton, may be the reason they appeared so very dingy, but otherwise they were all very comfortably clad. Their costume consists of a light jacket; wide trousers, fitting tightly to the leg from the knee to the ankle, and buttoned down the side like gaiters; red shoes, a striped cotton sash round the waist, and a small red cap, with a blue tassel, buff belts, and bright Birmingham fire-locks. Each party was preceded by a set of drums and fifes. As we walked along the wharfs we met several groups of both sailors and soldiers off duty. They seemed exceedingly happy, generally walking hand in hand, or playing with each other. They were all young, and mostly slight-made active men.

Our *entrée* into the city of the Ptolemies was anything but pleasing. Outside the gate, we had to pass through a village of miserable mud huts, only equalled in filth and squalidness by the wretched-looking set of old people, half-clad women, and wholly naked children, squatted around them. These extend all along the walls of the town on the land side, and are the abodes of the wives and families of the troops and sailors.

The streets are much wider than those of Algiers, and many of them very filthy. I was not many minutes in Alexandria before I was forcibly struck by the numbers of blind people I met at every turn: it is really incredible: the majority had but one eye, but many others were groping their way through the streets in perfect darkness. Squinting is a very common affection among the people of Alexandria, and the greater number of the lower orders are what would be termed "blear-eyed;" and wherever we went we discovered lamentable traces of the ravages of ophthalmia.* Prosper Alpinus, who resided many years in Egypt during the sixteenth century, accounts more satisfactorily perhaps than any writer for the extraordinary prevalence of ophthalmia in that country. The causes he assigns are three:—first, the prodigious quantity of nitre mingled with the soil, which, ascending in dust, injuriously affects the sight; second, the hot winds, which, blowing for a length of time in summer, suffice of themselves to produce inflammation; third, the sands carried through the air by those burning blasts, which, sometimes, in the course of a few minutes, produce the most painful effects. In this way, he observes, at least fifty persons out of every hundred are afflicted by ophthalmia.† In the desert tracts of Sinde, immediately on the banks of the Indus, ophthalmia has been found to prevail in an almost equal degree, and is there chiefly attributed to the immense clouds of dust which at certain seasons of the year are continually driving before the wind, penetrating tents and houses, and covering the very meat upon the table, as though it were dredged with flour. On one occasion, an officer jocularly observed, that his champagne was almost converted into a paste by the dust.‡

During our walk through the city, we happened to light upon one of the donkey stations, when a scene ensued that beggars all description. The whole body of donkey boys, with their animals, rushed upon us with one accord the moment we made our appearance, pushing, jostling, and abusing

* Wilde, Narrative, p. 246.

† De Medicinâ Ægyptiorum, lib. i., p. 53.

‡ Delhi Gazette.

each other in most unintelligible jargon; and half-a-dozen laying hold of each of us at once, attempted to place us, *nolens volens*, on their donkeys. I was literally lifted off and on three of them, before I could employ my stick to any advantage, to deter others from plucking me off the one on which I had at last secured a seat. The whole scene is really so ludicrous, that it is worth witnessing for *once*, after which I would advise all travellers to provide themselves with a good stout *koorbash*, which is made of the hide of the hippopotamus, and forms a staple article of commerce with the inhabitants of Upper Nubia, and on the Blue River; it is the only remedy for an Alexandrian ass-boy. As soon as we were fairly seated, the boys set the animals off at a most dashing pace, through the narrow streets, over bread-stalls, old women, and all the various merchandise that strew the floor of an eastern bazaar. The boys kept goading the donkeys with a sharp stick, and shouting to the people, "Riglac, riglac, darick,"—"Get out of the way," and cursing in tolerably plain *English*. It was quite impossible to stop or hold up against the *vis à tergo*. I nearly came in collision with several enormous camels, ran foul of various Egyptian officers, naval and military, and narrowly escaped upsetting numerous blind people at every turn; bounding or trampling over whole hosts of half-starved dogs that are always lurking about the bazaars. To attempt to reason with our drivers was out of the question; the more we endeavoured to pull up, the more they shouted and urged on the animals; and to turn in the narrow crowded streets was impossible. The boys laughed and seemed to enjoy it of all things, beating the unfortunate dogs most unmercifully whenever they came across them. I formed but a very passive member of the trio to which I belonged; as a formidable blow on my donkey's head, from some passing stick, very soon convinced me. At this the beast suddenly twisted into the mouth of a narrow lane, which seemed from the smell to be the tobacco-bazaar; when in rushed a crowd of every description, as if pursued by some terrible enemy—an *avalanche* could not have more confused the city. When the panic had subsided, in majestic state came the governor's coach; and, indeed, it was necessary to fly from it. Away it rattled with four horses and a proportion of outriders, as indifferently as if it had been flying over Salisbury Plain, bumping against the shops from side to side as it went. It would not have been possible to upset it; and, aware of this security, with most imposing dignity sat the Pasha of Alexandria, with an amber-headed pipe in his mouth, and an equally grave companion on the opposite seat. This was an apparition I never expected; and although such an advance in civilisation is highly commendable, I hope, when carriages become general, those who indulge in them may see the necessity of building towns to hold them.* This was all ludicrous enough. Another exhibition, equally characteristic, was now encountered. We were stopped by a large crowd, which quite filled the street, near one of the public warehouses. I heard heavy blows, followed by piercing cries, in the midst of the throng of rather shabby-looking people. Urging on my donkey to the

* Major Skinner.

spot, I saw an athletic man inflicting merciless blows upon a female with a heavy stick. She cried out piteously, but without any effect. The crowd looked on with interest and apparent satisfaction, and no one attempted to interfere. I inquired of a young Arab dragoman what was the meaning of this outrage. He answered, with an air of great indifference, in his bad English, "It is an Arab man licking his woman." I asked him if this was a common practice; he answered, "Yes; the wife do bad, and the Arab lick 'em." I afterwards learned that this sort of domestic discipline is universal in this country. No one supposes it is wrong, or that the conjugal relation can exist on better terms. A European lady, resident in Alexandria, informed us that she had lately inquired of a favourite servant after the health of his wife,—"Very well," he said; "better than common the last two days, since he had given her a good flogging." She told him that Englishmen did not whip their wives. He replied it was indispensable to whip Arab women, otherwise their husbands could not live with them: they were not like Frank women.*

To return, however, to our *montures*. It has been remarked by some travellers that the Egyptian donkey, as well as the camel, is *shaven*. However, a shaved jack-ass is a phenomenon which neither in Egypt nor elsewhere ever came under my observation. In the desert the camels are said to be clipped by the Bedouins; but it would greatly enhance the comedy of a pilgrimage to Mecca to behold a string of those ungainly quadrupeds closely shaven, with their enormous burdens on their backs, surmounted by the driver, toiling over the sandy plains, or down the rocky ravines which separate the Egyptian Mussulman from the tomb of his prophet. The barbers no doubt would greatly approve of the fashion, though there might, perhaps, be some difficulty in passing the razor over the camel's hunch. The ass would submit to this, as to every other infliction, patiently.

Ali Bey, *à propos* of asses, observes, that although the Egyptian quadrupeds of this species be extremely small—in some cases not exceeding thirty-seven inches in height—they are extremely quick-paced and full of vivacity. It may often be doubted, however, whether the vivacity resides in the ass or in the koorbash of the urchin who urges it forward. It may, nevertheless, be conceded to the worthy traveller, that the introduction of these beasts into our great European cities would be judicious; and had his beyship ever visited Hampstead Heath, he would have perceived that some steps have already been taken towards carrying out his suggestion.

When I had reached the midst of an extensive area, on one side of which was a wide street running down to the borders of the old harbour, with a row of high white-washed houses on each side, while, on the other, was a heap of mud, and narrow lanes opening upon it, that would, I think, have done no discredit to our St. Giles's, my little guide stopped me, and asked where we were to go. This was a simple question, and conveyed to me in one Italian word—"Dove?" but it was far beyond my power to answer. I took the opportunity of a parley, however, to shake off my companion and his donkey; and having gained some piastres from the boatman who

* Dr. Olin.

brought me on shore, in exchange for a French piece, I rewarded him beyond all his hopes.

I alighted in front of a guard-room that stands at the entrance of the street. The men had just turned out to do honour to a mounted officer, who caracoled past on a pretty little horse, and had the air of a man of some distinction. He was dressed in blue cloth, *à la Turque,* with a pair of European boots and large brass spurs; instead of a shawl round his waist, he had a girdle, and no turban graced his head. He wore the close red cap, with about half an inch of a neat white one peeping below it; he was compact, and, I may add, soldier-like enough, but shorn of everything that gives in my eyes dignity and grace to an Oriental. He reminded me very much of the compressed and uncomfortable appearance of a cock that has just had its comb cut off. The soldiers of the guard wore the same sort of head-dress, and were clothed in scarlet serge, being in make something of a compromise between the fashions of the East and West; the officer, who was a Turk—(his men were Arabs)—was dressed in the same manner, with the addition of a quantity of gold; and round his wrist he wore a strip of hide, with which he inflicted most tremendous cuts on the faces of the poor men if they were not, in military phrase "well dressed."*

Though the persons to whom I had brought letters of introduction happened on my arrival to be absent at Cairo, I still experienced the princely hospitality which our countrymen settled in the East seldom fail to exercise. An invitation to sup and spend the evening out awaited me on my landing, so that, having seen my baggage safely deposited at the "Aquila D'Oro," I immediately proceeded to the house of my new friends. All the donkeys of Alexandria were of course at my disposal; and though I could only ride one at once, I had the satisfaction to be followed all the way by half a dozen supernumeraries, which the owner of each maintained was far superior to the one I had mounted. Every Englishman is transformed at Alexandria into a naval officer, or the master of a ship at least. I had of course the honour to be thus complimented: "I say, captan," exclaimed a crowd of laughing, grinning urchins, pushing their beasts before me, as they shouted, to stop the way, "ber good donkey, dam good jackass; take, take!" The owner of my beast, alarmed lest, if sufficient time were allowed me, I might perchance change my mind and my *monture,* applied his stick vigorously to the crupper of my donkey, and bawling out at the same time in his best Lingua Franca, "Lashee la breed, lashee la breed, Senor Captan!" soon made an opening through his opposing rivals, flooring some, and sending others spinning on either side towards the walls of the houses. In this dashing way we proceeded until, in an incredibly short space of time, I was safely deposited at my place of destination.

English people are the same all the world over. I need scarcely therefore describe my entertainment, which was such, that, had it not been for the divans, the windows, the pipes, and those who filled them, I might have imagined myself at home again. The ladies exhibited all that quiet elegance of manners which belongs almost exclusively to our countrywomen. They

* Major Skinner.

had seen much of the world, and conversed well, but never obtruded their remarks. We talked of my projected journey and of the countries through which I was to pass. The coffee, the wine, and the pipes were excellent; and so deeply interested were we all in the topics under discussion, that it was not until a very late hour we thought of separating.

On taking leave of my hospitable entertainers, I learned the existence of a salutary regulation, compelling all persons after dark to have a light borne before them, or run the risk of being arrested by the nightly guard, and detained until the morning. Accordingly an Arab servant was ordered to conduct me with a lantern to my inn. It was late; few persons were in the streets; the Arab paced before me in silence; but, not knowing exactly where I lodged, took me to the wrong inn. This was perplexing; for as he spoke no European language, and I no Arabic, we stood still in the street, looking at one another. The few stragglers who passed were all natives, ignorant of every language but their own. After turning over the matter in his mind for some time, the man seemed to derive some encouragement from my long black beard, and in an inquiring tone pronounced the word "Greco?" I shook my head. "Franco?" I replied in the affirmative in all the languages I knew: but this did not help us in the least. At length I remembered that the Tuscan Consul resided at the Golden Eagle, and on repeating his name, the Arab turned round and discovered the unknown house within five paces of where we stood.

The window of my bed-chamber overlooked the quarantine harbour. It was late, as I have said, yet, feeling little inclination to sleep, I drew aside the curtains, and gazed forth with feelings of indescribable pleasure on the tranquil basin. There was no moon: but the stars shone so brilliantly that all objects within a certain distance were distinctly visible. Numerous vessels, each carefully stationed a short way from the others, lay motionless upon the waters. They were all from suspected countries, and one with the plague then on board had cast anchor within fifty yards of where I stood. There was an Austrian gun-brig, on the deck of which, but a few days later, a most extraordinary tragedy was enacted. All the crew having been attacked by the plague, they one day, in the height of their delirium, rushed on deck, and fired the guns which happened to be loaded. The balls flew thick among the other shipping, and the cause of this strange conduct being conjectured, it was for some time thought it would be necessary to sink them. But the poor wretches were unable to reload their guns, on the carriages of which many of them dropped and died; one individual only—an officer, I am told—ultimately survived, the strength of his constitution triumphing, in spite of all disadvantages, over the disease.

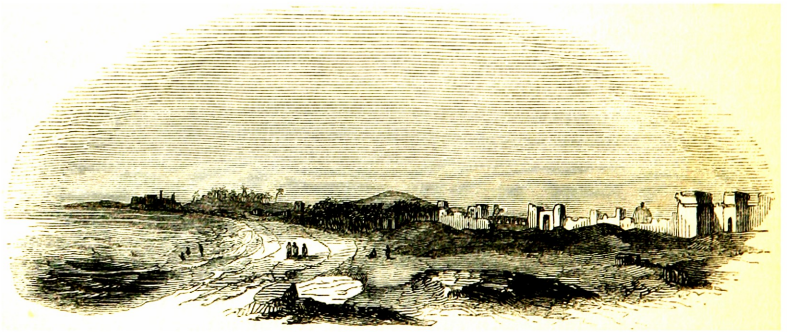
The bedsteads of the Golden Eagle, on one of which I am now about to throw myself, were all of iron, wood in these latitudes being somewhat too apt to harbour bugs. An ample curtain of thin gauze, descending from a considerable height, fell on all sides, and rested upon the bed-clothes, for the purpose of excluding the musquitoes. It is a nice operation to slip under this curtain without admitting one of your enemies along with you; for if a single intruder get in with you, farewell to your night's rest. I had the happiness to succeed, and the hum of the disappointed foe, mingling with the murmur of the waves on the beach, soon hushed me to sleep.

A former traveller, whom fear of the plague induced to sleep in the vessel that brought him hither, says: "We have a minor plague on board, musquitoes and flies; they boarded us yesterday as busy as custom-house officers; the flies are wading incessantly through this scrawl, following my pen as crows do the plough. What trouble, not sport, Domitian would have had here! Sir R. Wilson states that he used to kill such quantities at a time, that it appeared as if a cask of currants had been spilt. It is surely no harm to kill a musquito, and I do not know which are our greatest enemies, the flies or the musquitoes; they hold divided sway—half sting by night, the others sting by day." *

CHAPTER II.

DESCRIPTION OF ALEXANDRIA.—POMPEY'S PILLAR.—CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLES.

I WAS awakened, soon after dawn, by the singular scream of the stork under my window, mingled with the shrill voices of the Arabs, and the crowing of the cock, which does not here, as in Europe, proclaim the approach of morning, but is heard indifferently at all hours. My bed-chamber overlooked the sea-port, where on the left I enjoyed a view of the island on which the Pharos of Ptolemy Soter stood; and on the right of the modern fort, which commands the entrance into the harbour, a low ledge of rocks, commencing at the site of the Pharos, stretches out a considerable distance into the sea, and over this the waves break continually in spray and foam. Other rocks, unconnected with the former, occupy the centre of the harbour's mouth, and, opposing the course of the waves, are almost perpetually covered with snowy breakers.



Old Harbour of Alexandria.

Alexandria is situated in 31° 13′ 5″ north latitude, and 27° 35′ 30″

* Sir Frederick Henniker.

longitude, near Lake Mareotis, on an isthmus which connects with *terra-firma* the peninsula that forms the two ports. The new port on the east is very open, and does not afford secure anchorage in stormy weather. At the extremity of the mole which protects it, the fort of the Pharos is built on the site where anciently stood the celebrated light-house of the Ptolemies. The old port on the west offers to ships of all sizes a deep and safe basin, though the entrance, as we have said, is difficult for such as draw much water. Before Mohammed Ali's time, Christian vessels were forbidden to enter the harbour, being compelled to content themselves with the dangerous road on the east. The prohibition probably traced its origin to a prophecy which foretold that upon the entrance of the first Christian ship into this port, the empire of the Mussulman in Egypt would be at an end. The prediction has not been literally accomplished; for European vessels are there, and the Crescent is still in the ascendant. It may be possible, however, to foresee the period in which the words of the seer shall receive their fulfilment.

Surrounded on one side by the sea, and on the other by the sands of the desert, Alexandria is placed, we may almost say, in an insular position. The present city, as has been often remarked, has inherited scarcely anything from the ancient one but its name and its ruins. The original city was built by the architect Dinocrates, after plans sketched by Alexander. According to Pliny, its circuit was fifteen miles, and it contained a population of 300,000 citizens and as many slaves. A street, two thousand feet long and one hundred broad, traversed it from north to south, and was crossed by another nearly as beautiful. Magnificent palaces, temples, gymnasia, circuses, theatres, monuments of every kind were crowded in the circumference.

When Alexandria was taken by Amrou it formed, according to the Arab historian, three cities, Menne, Nekite, and Iskanderia. In his report to the Caliph Omar, Amrou says, that it contained 4,000 palaces, 4,000 baths, 400 theatres or public buildings, and 12,000 shops. About the year 1212 of our æra, a successor of Saladin surrounded it with a wall two leagues in length, flanked by a hundred towers, which still exist, and have been repaired by Mohammed Ali. Under the yoke of the Mussulmans, but principally under that of the Mamlouks, Alexandria declined rapidly; and, at the time of the French invasion, was nothing but a large straggling village and a resort of pirates. Its population amounted scarcely to 8,000 souls, its fortifications were crumbling to decay, and such was the audacity of the Bedouins, that they frequently rode with impunity up to its walls to commit their ravages, and it was dangerous even to pay a visit to Pompey's Pillar without an escort.

The rule of the French in Egypt was not sufficiently long to allow them to do much towards restoring the former splendour of Alexandria. They added, however, new fortifications, and repaired the old ones, which were fast going to ruin when they came into their possession. Mohammed Ali, however, was no sooner established in power than he perceived the threefold importance, military, maritime, and commercial, with which nature had endowed Alexandria.

The city indeed is the military key of Egypt, the point against which the first attacks of an enemy must necessarily be directed. It was above all things requisite, therefore, to provide for its defence. The descent made by the British in 1807 proved to the Viceroy how fatal the least negligence in this particular might prove.

The ports of Alexandria are the only ones possessed by Egypt; and if fleets are necessary to protect the independence of this country, which European powers can only attack from the sea, Alexandria affords a vast and well-defended retreat. Mohammed Ali has availed himself of all the natural advantages of the place. He has made of Alexandria a military port, and has there established his arsenal.

The commercial importance of any point on the northern coast of Egypt depends of course on the facility of the intercourse which may be carried on with the centre, Cairo. In antiquity, Alexandria communicated with the heart of the country by a branch of the Nile, at the mouth of which it was placed; but this branch being gradually filled up by the deposits of the water, the first Arab conquerors were compelled to dig a vast canal, of which Eastern historians give a magnificent description. But under the administration of the Mamlouks this canal gradually deteriorated and soon became a mere ditch, completely dry during the greater part of the year. Upon this Alexandria lost its commercial importance, which was transferred to Rosetta. But Mohammed Ali has restored it to its rightful uses, by

Bridge of the Aqueduct over the Canal, Alexandria.

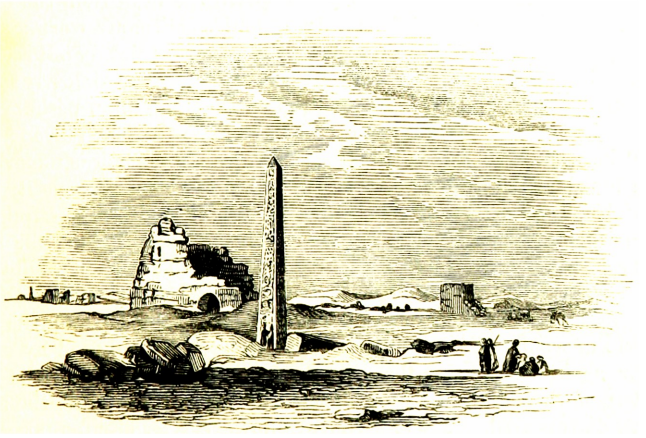
opening the navigable canal called Mahmoudiyah, in honour of the Sultan Mahmoud; and the whole commerce of Egypt is now concentrated at Alexandria. The office of the minister of commerce is established in that city, and it is there that he disposes to European merchants of the exports of that country.

Thus regenerated, the population of Alexandria has rapidly increased,

amounting now to 60,000 souls, including the crews of the fleet and the workmen of the arsenal, forming about one-third. The other two-thirds include 20,000 Arabs, 6,000 Turks, 10,000 Jews and Copts, and 5,000 Europeans.

The aspect of the city, it will be easily imagined, has been greatly changed within the last few years. The immense cemeteries which were once within the walls have been removed without. The sheets of stagnant water which formerly gave rise to noxious exhalations have been dried up, and the hollows filled. The streets have not been paved, it is true, but they are clean, which was not formerly the case. Buildings of all kinds, arsenals, palaces, barracks, manufactories, hospitals, &c., have been erected; and a considerable portion of the wall near the shore has been thrown down to make way for the growth of the city.

The marine arsenal is built on the peninsula called Ras-el-Tin, the Cape of Figs, together with the palace of the Viceroy, and many other edifices belonging to the government. The isthmus which unites Ras-el-Tyn to terra-firma is covered by the Turkish town, built on the ordinary plan of Mussulman cities. Then comes the European quarter, formerly called the Frank quarter, which has long been superior to those parts of the town occupied by the natives. But it is more especially since the establishment of Mohammed Ali's government,—for until then the residence of the consuls-general had never been definitively fixed at Alexandria,—that it has begun to assume an imposing aspect. In 1825 there were still but few okellas; but now the quarter has entirely changed, having extended from the New Port to Cleopatra's Needles. In the neighbourhood of these



Cleopatra's Needles.

monuments there exists at present a sort of square about 800 yards long and 150 broad. The houses which surround this place are built after European designs, and are very elegant. Some of them belong to Ibrahim Pasha. Here are the residences of the principal consuls.

Within the old wall are two eminences about 200 feet in height, crowned

by forts built by the French army. One of them still retains the name of General Caffarelli Dufalga, killed at the siege of St. Jean d'Acre. The hill on which it is situated, the nearest to the town, is formed by a heap of rubbish, and does not, to all appearance, date farther back than the time of the Arabs. The other, called Kom-el-Dyck, the Cock's Hill, is a calcareous rock, against which in old times stood a theatre. On its sides until lately were a few wretched Arab huts; but at present the rich Europeans, having discovered the healthiness of the spot, have built upon it villas, each with its garden.

The environs of Alexandria are covered, for the space of two leagues, with extensive ruins, which prove that there is nothing exaggerated in what historians have related of the wonders of the ancient city. The materials with which the Arab town is constructed, were furnished by such ruins as were scattered near the surface; but vast remains may still be found even at the depth of sixty feet.

Preparatory to issuing forth for the purpose of examining minutely the interesting and varied scenes, of which the above is an outline, I, in compliance with the custom of travellers, had my head shaved, and assumed the tarboosh, an elegant red felt cap with a blue silk tassel, which in Egypt has almost universally superseded the turban. But this must be regarded as a highly injudicious innovation; for, besides that the forehead, entirely exposed to the burning sun, becomes blistered and wrinkled, the eyes suffer extremely from the fierceness of the light, so that, after a few days' journey, ophthalmia frequently ensues. Broad-brimmed hats, if the Pasha could cause them to be adopted, might in part prevent the Egyptians from degenerating into a race of Cyclops. To guard the head from the heat of the sun, two of these caps, with another of double calico, are worn; and as the season advances, or as we proceed further south, a thick handkerchief is stuffed into the crown. Notwithstanding that the hair is always closely shaven, all these envelopes keep the head exceedingly warm, and may, perhaps, contribute more than any other cause to render the Egyptians grey-headed from their youth. The effect of the climate of Egypt upon the hair is remarkable. My own beard, which in Europe was soft, silky, and almost straight, began immediately on my arrival at Alexandria to curl, to grow crisp, strong, and coarse, and before I had reached Essouan resembled horse-hair to the touch, and was all disposed in ringlets about the chin. This is no doubt to be accounted for by the extreme dryness of the air, which, operating through several thousand years, has, in the interior, changed the hair of the negro into a kind of wool. At least the conclusion seems warranted by experience; for again on quitting the country I found, in traversing the moist atmosphere of the Mediterranean, that nearly all the curl and crispness of the beard disappeared. My experiment, however, terminated at Malta, where I shaved and re-assumed the European costume.

It is the custom among the Franks of Alexandria to dine about noon, after which, in imitation of the Orientals, they generally indulge themselves with a siesta; but I always found one or two individuals who preferred riding out among the ruins, and who, having themselves frequently visited every quarter of the city, were tolerably indifferent respecting the direction we took. Most travellers eschew the sight of misery; and it is

the regular practice of the Pasha's professional admirers to dwell incessantly on his magnificent constructions, on his dockyards, his arsenals, his fleets, and his palaces. It is proper, however, sometimes to look at the other side of the picture, and observe the striking contrast existing in this country between the ruling class and the oppressed and powerless people. Evidences of this exist everywhere, but most strikingly present themselves perhaps in the Arab suburbs of Alexandria; which I was careful to visit soon after my arrival.

A few hundreds of low and dark mud hovels, built or rather hidden amidst vast heaps of rubbish, afford a scanty shelter to a population whose misery seems to exceed the bounds of possibility, little accustomed as I was then to contemplate the new civilisation of Egypt: father, mother, children are huddled in these pestiferous dens, pell-mell with dogs, cows, goats, all impressed with the same aspect of misery as the wretches to whom they belong. It was scarcely possible to recognise our fellow-creatures in these men, undermined by want and blighted by slavery; in those half-naked, squalid, ricketty children, with swollen bellies, and eyes and mouths perpetually assailed by a cloud of flies, which they have neither the will nor the strength to drive away; in those women, whose long blue tattered garments scarcely conceal their emaciated forms, and whose countenance, shaded by a black veil, recals the woful aspect of the penitent nuns.

Nothing can give an idea of the wretchedness to which are reduced these unfortunate natives; for in Egypt woe to whatever is Egyptian! To the Turks, to the Europeans, are accorded liberty, privilege, licence; to the Arabs and the Blacks, absolute deprivation of all rights. Power is the lot of the first class, subjection of the other.

What a strange country is this, in which man and nature seem to have vied in accumulating the most striking and painful contrasts! By the side of the most luxuriant and varied vegetation, the African desert spreads its sad scenes of desolation; and near monuments which have braved the storms of ages, palaces of yesterday are crumbling to ruin; in the midst of abundance, on the most fertile soil in the whole world, the fellahs are in rags and dying of hunger. The entire population of the country bends unresistingly beneath an iron yoke, and exhausts itself to minister to the luxuries of a handful of strangers who oppress it.*

Nothing could more forcibly exemplify the frailty of the Arab tenements in the Alexandrian suburbs, than a circumstance which occurred during a recent winter, which being more rainy than ordinary, between three or four hundred of them were washed down in the course of one stormy night. On the morrow the wretched inhabitants, fathers, mothers, and children, were beheld sitting in the most forlorn and pitiable state, on the vast heaps of mud to which their dwellings had been reduced. In many cases they had not even had time to carry out the few earthen pots and mats which constituted their whole worldly substance, before the walls fell in and smashed or buried them. Here, therefore, was an occasion for the exercise of charity. Nor was the occasion neglected. First, the Europeans came forward, and in the course of a few hours subscribed a large sum, which, however, knowing the character of the tyrant with whom they had to deal, they did not venture

* De Cadalvène et De Breuvery.

to distribute without having first obtained the Pasha's permission. Upon their application it was peremptorily refused! His Highness, shamed by their alacrity, or jealous of the influence they might thus obtain over the Arabs, said he would provide for his own poor, and advised them to bestow what they had collected on the European hospital. This of course they did; and, to the honour of Mohammed Ali be it said, the sufferers by the storm were provided for, and had new huts erected for them, better in all probability than those which had been thrown down.*

In the midst of the prostrate remains of the ancient city we find, thinly scattered, the modern dwellings of the actual lords of the soil, of which some are fine large houses, in the Turkish style of architecture, situated for the most part in gardens, or rather small groves of date palms; which, with their lofty columnar trunks, and long pendulous branches waving and trembling in the breeze, constitute one of the most interesting objects in an African landscape. This beautiful tree was now loaded with fruit, which hung down between the branches in prodigious clusters of from fifty to one hundred pounds weight. Of these dates, some were small and of a dark yellow; others red, and others nearly black. The stems of the clusters, as large as a man's arm, and of a tawny yellow colour, come out between the branches on every side, and scarcely seem equal to the great weight which they have to support. The yellow dates are by far the smallest known, and the black ones the largest, in Lower Egypt; but at Es-Souan, in the confines of Nubia, are found yellow dates three inches in length, though I was told that only one tree bearing such fruit existed in Egypt. Nothing in the vegetable creation can be more beautiful than a date palm, a hundred feet in height, loaded with ripening fruit, such as we find on the plains of Memphis. I say ripening, because, as soon as ripe, each date is gathered to make room for the rest, and lest it should fall and perish. Even the creaking sounds of the water-wheels, as the blindfold oxen went round and round, and of the tiny cascade splashing from the string of earthen pots into the troughs, which receive and distribute the water to the wooden canals, arranged for conveying it over the grounds, were not disagreeable to my ears; since they called up before the imagination the primitive ages of mankind, and the rude contrivances of the early kings of Egypt for the advancement of agriculture, which have undergone little change or improvement up to the present hour.

As almost everything at Alexandria which can be regarded as a relic of past ages lies beyond the inner wall, it is customary with travellers to divide the environs into a certain number of parts, all of which they visit in succession. The place, however, is now interesting merely as a site. Power, and art, and beauty, and learning, have, we know, been there; but for this knowledge we are almost wholly indebted to history. Still, while musing among its scanty fragments and choked and broken cisterns, we experience that melancholy satisfaction which every relic of a great people, now vanished, inevitably inspires. Riding out with a young Egyptian lady

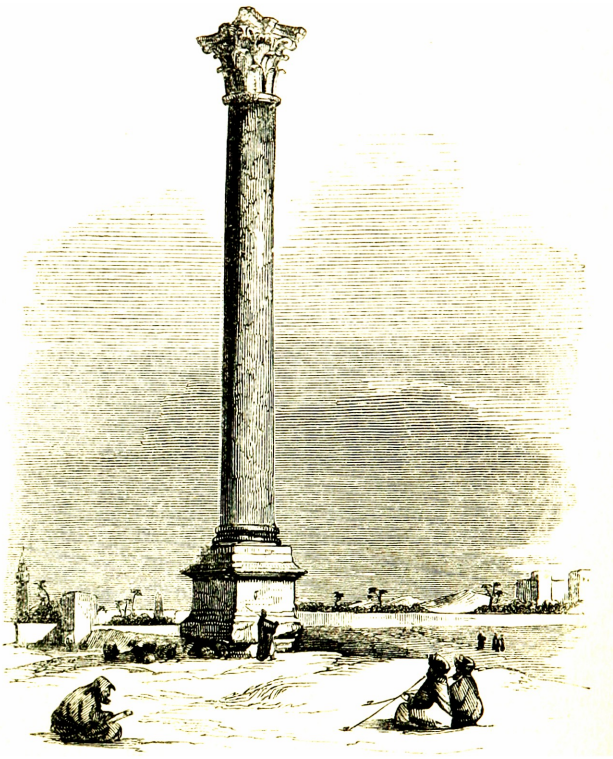
* The disaster which on this occasion befel the poor Arabs, may serve to show the fallacy of the opinion that rain is unknown in Egypt. Abdellatif observed, long ago, that although rain is rare in the Said, it falls abundantly in the northern part of the country and on the coast, particularly at Alexandria and Damietta, though little or no advantage be taken of it in agriculture.

toward the Rosetta or Canopic suburbs, I passed those overthrown columns and vast substructions, which, according to M. Champollion, mark the position of the famous Alexandrian library; and, having issued through the gate, entered on a country wild and barren, but exceedingly interesting to the imagination, where long trains of camels, laden with water or with wood, and mounted or followed by Arabs, were toiling across the sands toward the city. The march of these tall, spare, uncouth animals, with heads erect, is singularly majestic: beautiful they undoubtedly are not; but here, on the borders of the wilderness, neither the ass nor the horse appears so entirely in harmony with the scene. On each side of the road, which is merely a broad pathway worn in the soil by the feet of animals, large mounds of sand, thrown up by the action of the winds, or by the hands of man, diversify the aspect of the plain, whose undulating surface reminded me of the sea. In the distance, toward Rosetta, a long dark line of verdure like a cloud, marked the site of extensive date groves; and near at hand were various plantations and gardens, the property of Europeans, which we traversed, and proceeded to the bank of the Mahmoodiyah, or great canal of Alexandria, where we saw numerous large boats bringing merchandise from Cairo, and towed along by men, as barges are by horses in England. In the course of our ride we observed the elegant palace and gardens of Moharram Bey, and returned towards the city by Pompey's Pillar.

The appearance, dimensions, and history of this famous column have so frequently engaged the attention and excited the controversial propensities of travellers, that nothing new can now be advanced concerning it: but it may be worth remarking, that monuments which, from the frequent mention made of them, seem hackneyed and common-place in books, by no means appear so when actually beheld. You for the time forget the dissertations of the antiquarian, the measurements of the mathematician, the spruce trim copy of the artist, and yield up your mind to the romantic enthusiasm inspired by grand historical associations. It is doubtless important that we should not attribute to one man the great public works bequeathed to mankind by another, whether those works were designed for use or ornament; but there is a pleasure altogether independent of antiquarian erudition derived from the contemplation of the monuments of past ages, vague, shadowy, composed of many mingled sentiments and feelings, but sweet to the mind, and perhaps the only adequate compensation which the traveller can ever receive for his toils and privations. While gazing on this vast lonely column, the names of Leo Africanus, Pietro della Valle, Pocock, Shaw, Bruce, Volney and Denon, all men of immortal reputation, who had once mused on the spot where I then stood, came crowding upon my memory. I thought, too, of what Alexandria was when that pillar was erected; of the temples, the theatres, the gardens, which once delighted the eye from that barren eminence—all now vanished like a dream.

The height of Pompey's Pillar, including that of the pedestal and capital, is ninety feet. Some travellers have inferred, on account of its rough workmanship, that the capital is extremely ancient, whereas its coarseness of execution and bad taste prove it to be the production of a very late period, when the arts had all degenerated in Egypt. The shaft

of rose-coloured granite was exceedingly beautiful before it had been disfigured by the absurd vanity of nautical travellers, who have daubed it all



Pompey's Pillar.

over with their barbarous names. Miss Talbot, a young Irish lady, who ascended with a party of officers to the summit, is said to have written there a letter to Mr. Salt, which she dated :—"From the top of Pompey's Pillar." The Consul, then at Cairo, very wittily, in replying to her, dated his epistle: — "From the bottom of Joseph's Well." Into antiquarian research it is not my province to enter. That the column had no reference, however, to the Great Pompey may be very confidently assumed. Though by whom it was erected, and in honour of what emperor, if of any, are points scarcely capable of decision. At any rate, they are not worth all the learning which has already been expended on them. Objects of this kind have in all ages most amazingly puzzled the Arabs. One of their writers, who visited the pillar in the thirteenth century, tells us that there then existed a cupola on its summit, and that, strewed around in confusion, were the fragments of other columns, which, along with it, had supported the roof of a vast portico erected, he surmised, by Alexander the Great, for the accommodation of Aristotle, who there taught philosophy to the

Egyptians! On the same spot also stood the famous library burned at the command or with the permission of Omar by Amrou-Ben-Alas.* Gibbon, to mitigate the pungency of our sorrow for this catastrophe, insinuates that the greater number of the books must have been on theology, if in reality the conflagration ever took place.

From this relic of antiquity, near which we descended into the vaulted passages of an extensive venerable edifice, whose lower part seems still to exist beneath the sands, we proceeded over innumerable heaps of ruins, to Cleopatra's Needles, those beautiful obelisks of rose-granite, which are supposed to have adorned the entrance to the palace of the Ægyptio-Macedonian kings. Of these the one towards the east is still standing: the other has been overthrown, probably by an earthquake, and lies partly buried in the sand. The latter is mounted on props, and seems as if prepared for a journey: accident alone has prevented its being in England.†

CHAPTER III.

Climate of Egypt.—A Levantine Party.—The Pasha's Fleet.

In their description of Alexandria, travellers would frequently appear to have been more intent on indulging their genius for satire or exaggeration, than of conveying a correct idea of the place. No two accounts resemble each other; but, as the city itself has undergone innumerable revolutions and changes of fortune, much of these discrepancies may, perhaps, have arisen from this circumstance. At present it is a respectable, if not a handsome city. The number of spacious okellas inhabited by European merchants; the new detached houses erected in various quarters by Turks and Franks; the elegant well-furnished shops; the

Tower in the Wall of the Arab Quarter.

* Abdellatif. † Richardson.

mosques, convents, villas, and palaces, situated within the walls,—render its aspect gay and agreeable. As a place of residence, it is undoubtedly preferable to any other city in Egypt; indeed, it would, in many respects, bear a comparison with some of the seaport towns of Italy or France. Two small theatres, with temporary decorations and scenery, and supported by amateurs, have been established by the French and Italian residents; and the performances, though no professed actors are employed, are far from being contemptible. Other amusements, adapted to the taste of civilised nations, are likewise obtainable; music parties, conversazioni, soirées, balls, routs, dinners, wine, dancing girls, &c. Latterly, indeed, the Pasha has affected extreme strictness on the subject of the ghawazi, who are forbidden to visit professionally the houses of Europeans. But they still exhibit at the coffee-houses, of which there are numbers at Alexandria. Here, while sipping your mocha and flourishing a palm-flapper to drive away the flies, you may behold the performances of the *artiste*, or listen to the tales of some wandering story-teller who has by accident found his way to the coast. A book-club, consisting of the most respectable residents, has been established; and a newspaper, in French and Arabic, is published by the Pasha. Both here and elsewhere in Egypt, the dwellings of the fellahs, unworthy the name of houses, are inferior in comfort and appearance to dog-kennels or pig-sties; but these constitute no part of the city, being merely a straggling suburb attached to certain quarters. A wise government, however, would provide the poor with more airy and commodious habitations, with the view of arresting the progress of depopulation, and interesting the body of the people in its support.

Though nearly surrounded by water, Alexandria, in the time of Strabo, was esteemed a healthy city; and for this phenomenon the geographer accounts in a satisfactory and philosophical manner, by explaining the peculiar nature of Lake Mareotis. Other lagoons, he says, from the effects of evaporation, become half-dry in the season of the greatest heat; and their shores, converted into so many swamps or morasses, exhale mephitic effluvia, which corrupt the air and engender disease. Mareotis, on the contrary, being filled by the influx of the Nile, whose inundation occurs in summer, instead of retiring within its bed, and exposing a marshy, slimy margin to the action of the sun, rises above its ordinary level, and abundantly irrigates the neighbouring fields, thus effectually preventing all pestiferous exhalations. In the time of the Mamlooks, when this lake had been in a great measure dried up, the miasmata arising from it, though the land was partly brought into cultivation, seem greatly to have accelerated the ravages of the plague; which, since the sea was introduced into it by the English, has been much less frequent and destructive.

At present Alexandria appears to be a salubrious city, though the atmosphere in winter is, perhaps, too moist and cold. My own health, during my short stay there, was upon the whole good; and the observations I made on the health of others likewise corroborated my opinion, the majority of the European inhabitants being no less hale and robust than they could have been in their respective countries. Even the complexions of such women as take exercise, without too much exposing themselves to the sun, are ruddy and clear; and their forms, entirely abandoned to nature,

possess all that plumpness and richness of contour which distinguish the females of the North.

It should, however, be observed that the constitution, though not subjected, by the nature of the climate, to more than the ordinary chances of disease, appears to wear out more rapidly than in Europe. Youth and manhood are of comparatively short duration; and old age, both of the mind and body, makes its approaches earlier. Nowhere have I beheld so few old people. But the remark applies equally to natives and foreigners, to women no less than to men. The signs of premature decay, and of an old age unconnected with length of days, everywhere meet the eye. Women, who, in the temperate regions of Europe, would still be regarded as in the bloom of life, or objects of the deepest interest and love, here seem to be verging towards decrepitude, with their hanging bosoms, hollow eyes, wrinkles, and emaciated limbs.

> "Quò fugit Venus? heu! quòve color? decens
> Quò motus? Quid habes illius, illius,
> Quæ spirabat amores?"

The men, also, supposed to be less the creatures of climate, experience early a damping of the fire of the imagination, from the decrease, probably, of that animal heat, that physical energy, which supplies fuel to the passions; in short, the sun of life is obscured before it has declined from the meridian. Intemperance and excesses, in which both Turk and Christian are here too apt to indulge, may, perhaps, contribute towards producing this premature decline of the senses and intellect; but the result is principally chargeable on the climate, since, even to the temperate and virtuous, length of days, and

> "A green old age unconscious of decay,"

are rarely vouchsafed.

Among the Bedouins, instances occur of men who attain the age of one hundred, or one hundred and ten years; but no example of such longevity in Turk or Fellah, inhabiting the valley of the Nile, has ever, I believe, been known. The ancient Egyptians, who probably discovered, at a very early period, this peculiar defect of their climate, laboured, by rigid attention to diet and medicine, to counteract its effects, though without any remarkable degree of success, since it was observed by the ancients that, of all mankind, the Egyptians were the shortest-lived. To children, likewise, the air of Egypt is highly unfavourable. Instead of that freshness and beauty, that benignant placidity, betokening the unruffled calm of the soul, which, in more temperate regions, are the companions of childhood, infants generally exhibit countenances deformed by pain and sickness. With their eyes running and half-closed with purulent matter, swollen bellies, tottering limbs, scurfy heads, and sallow squalid features, they repress that involuntary affection to which the innocence and loveliness natural to their age would otherwise give birth. Among the Greeks and rich Turks fine children are frequently found; but the offspring of Europeans who settle in the country are generally cadaverous and unsightly. Their lives, also, are extremely uncertain; and, accordingly, large families are rare. The Arabic writers best acquainted with Egypt observe that it is not until young men approach their twentieth year that they begin to develop the beauties of

the form.* With this opinion, however, my own experience does not concur. It appeared to me that about the age of thirteen or fourteen, boys already had become slim and active, while girls of the same age already displayed many of the charms of womanhood.

On the plague of flies, which is still one of the plagues of Egypt, Sir Frederick Henniker observes:—"The most strange, the most disgusting, and the most unavoidable sight in Alexandria is this—the eyes and mouths of all the children are literally embanked with flies; their mouths are beset as if they were the mouths of honey-bottles, their eyes are too filthy for description; the children have no prescient dread of ophthalmia, but suffer the vermin to remain undisturbed; whether these two organs of sense are used as fly-traps, or whether to be fly-blown is to be complimented, I will not decide; but Plato was more fortunate in his infancy in being over-swarmed by bees."

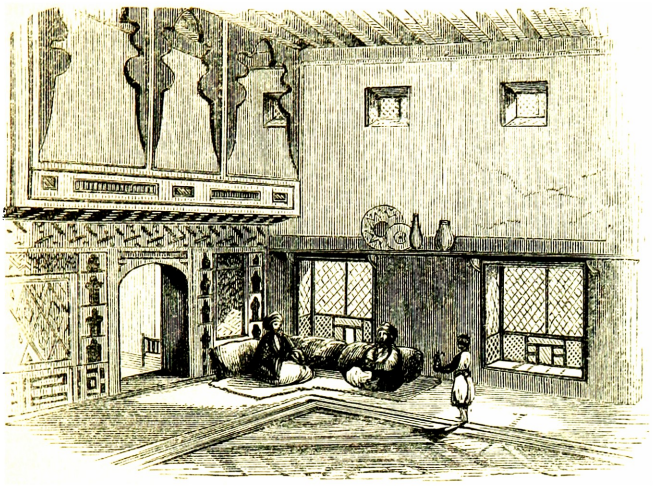
But, whatever may be the disagreeables or inconveniences of Alexandria, the Franks and Levantines who reside there contrive to spend their time agreeably enough. One of the habits most general amongst them may have some reference to the flies: they all smoke inveterately. A lady with whom I spent many hours during my stay used constantly to present me with a pipe on my entrance, after which, taking another herself, she would seat herself beside me on the divan, where for an hour or so we puffed away as gravely as two Pashas, occasionally intermingling a remark or an observation with the smoke. On such occasions the musquitoes generally made themselves scarce, having obviously an aversion to the fumes of tobacco. It may be doubted therefore whether the most fastidious persons, if they had to choose between the two evils, would not prefer the smoke to the flies, and if so, their presence will constitute the apology of the chibouque-loving ladies of the East. Other methods of killing time, more consonant with our European ideas, are likewise resorted to in the Frank quarter. Theatres and coffee-houses have already been mentioned; and to these may be added baths, dinners, evening parties, scandal, and dancing.

At the house of a French family I had the good fortune to meet all the principal Europeans of the city; the men were generally in Frank costumes, but among the ladies there were some of the gayer fashions of the Levant; and several of the elder ones stumped across the room in the high wooden shoes of Aleppo, made like clogs of sandal-wood, prettily inlaid with mother-of-pearl, which raised their wearers a foot at least above their natural height, while the younger ones had their black tresses braided round a scarlet cap similar to that worn by the men, like the folds of a turban, and tastily intertwisted with the threads of the silk tassel that hung from it. There appeared a struggle between Eastern and Western manners which should gain the ascendancy. The old ladies, without scruple, as they sat on the couches round the room, screwed up their legs *à la Turque;* and I thought I sometimes detected, by the absence of a pretty little foot that had been stolen up to a position it was accustomed to, that the young ones also would have preferred such an attitude.

There was an absence of form at any rate in the society, and I thought,

* Abdellatif.

in one ceremony that amused me much, not a little simplicity: most of the dancers, who seemed mere girls, were young mothers who could not for any time be separated from their babes; instead, however, of remaining at



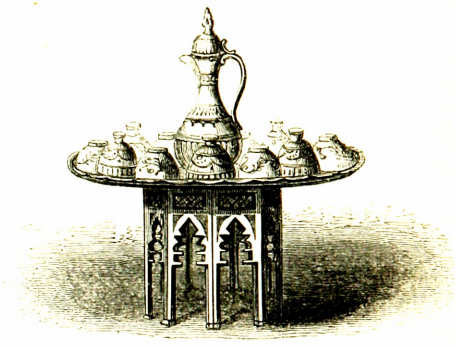
Interior of an Egyptian House.

home, they determined to combine their pleasure and their duty, and a procession of nurses, after a little while, filed through the dancing-room to an adjoining chamber. I did not quite understand the meaning of this interesting group at first; but a gentle whine from one of the infants caught the ears of an old lady, who clumped upon her pattens up to the seeming girl with whom I was dancing, and in very plain terms scolded her for suffering her child to starve. "I know its tone," said the old lady, "from a thousand."—"It is not mine, mama, I am sure," said my partner, and I thought a sharp argument would arise between them upon the subject; when suddenly the note was taken up by all the infants, and the old ladies, jumping off their seats, bustled about to drive in the young ones, who, to do them justice, showed no unwillingness, and in an instant the dance was abandoned, until, the office being performed, the mothers returned, and, apologising prettily for what could not be neglected, gave their hands once more to their partners, and resumed the dance until the lambs should again call them away by their bleating.*

Among the public establishments of Alexandria, the most important is undoubtedly the arsenal. Here Mohammed Ali has endeavoured, and not altogether without success, to imitate the maritime powers of Europe, though, while creating material improvements, he has not by any means been equally careful to promote the comforts or connect the interests of the natives engaged in carrying out his views. On the other hand, the Europeans employed are generally rewarded with honour, and paid liberally.

* Major Skinner.

Of these, the greater number have always been French, who have laboured to persuade the Pasha that, by attending sedulously to his navy, he might in time become the rival of Great Britain. As an Englishman, therefore, I could not but feel some curiosity to visit this, the chief creation of the Pasha. I was first ushered into an office near the entrance, where the commissioners of the dock-yard were seated, cross-legged, on a divan. They were exceedingly courteous, as, indeed, we invariably found the higher classes of Egyptian Moslems. Coffee was presented in small china cups, holding about a third of one of ours, not on a tray, but handed to each individual by a separate servant, on a small silver stand (zerf), exactly like an egg-cup, which I have always found very serviceable, as the finjans are so hot, one is in great danger of burning one's fingers.



Coffee Service.

The coffee is far superior to that commonly used by us; it is drunk without cream or sugar, boiling hot, and, as they never strain it, thick as mud; yet it has a delicious fragrance. Who will say that it is not a more grateful and more rational, while it is fully as refreshing, and much less injurious a beverage, than those intoxicating liquors in use in our northern countries?

In this, my first visit into polite society in the East, I was surprised at seeing each of the Moslems present make the usual salutation, by touching the forehead with the tips of the right-hand fingers, on receiving their coffee. At first I imagined it for the servant, but I afterwards learned that it is intended for the master of the house, who returns it. Their salute is peculiarly easy and graceful. Besides that mentioned above, others generally approach the open hand to the lips, and then touch the forehead. To an intimate friend, or superior, the salutation is by laying the hand first upon the breast, and then touching the lips and forehead, accompanied by a gentle inclination of the body forward.

Their dress was remarkably handsome. The outer cloak, or beneesh, of brown or drab cloth, trimmed with sable, fell in loose folds upon the divan, where they sat cross-legged, leaving their red, pointed slippers on the floor beneath. Their under-garment, of striped silk, was confined round the waist by a splendid cashmere shawl, in which was placed the ink-horn—the badge of their profession. The turban, bold, yet graceful, of white spotted muslin, overshadowed a face, handsome, expressive, and intellectual. The eyes of all those present were of exceeding brilliancy, and their long silky beards gave a dignity to their appearance, such as is not to be found

in the trim, well-shaven features of the European. Some few Copts, who were engaged in the office, wore black, the only colour allowed them in Egypt.

But we must pay a visit to those fine vessels now upon the stocks—and here is one just ready to be launched, which I will tell you something about, without having your ears assailed by the most stunning of all noises, the caulking and coppering. This is a two-decker, but corresponding in number of guns to our three-deckers, than any of which it is larger, being 3000 tons. It is not so long as some of ours, being but 189 feet by 40 in the beam, and will mount 100 guns. The timber of these vessels is confessedly very inferior, and much smaller than would be used in any English vessel of war; but as there are no forest trees in this land, most of it is imported from Trieste, as formerly from Karamania in Asia Minor. The shipwrights endeavour to make up in quantity for deficiency in quality, so that the bottoms of these vessels are perfect beds of timber. This is the *tenth* of this class, and there are eight in commission. The ninth was brought out of the docks yesterday, to be rigged and got ready for sea. The complement of men on board each of these is 1005, including officers, who in rank and number correspond to those of the English navy. Besides the ten line-of-battle ships, there are seven frigates, an armed steamer, four corvettes, eight brigs, and other small craft, in commission. So far as the vessels go, they are, I suspect, rather more than a match for the Porte. In our walk round the yard, we were surprised at the number and extent of the works, all divided into their several departments, and at the order and regularity that prevailed. Brass-founders, carvers, blacksmiths, carpenters, rope-makers, sail-makers, and all the different requisites in ship-building, upon a most extensive scale, all worked by native hands, who amount to about 800.

The stores and arsenal were as neat, as clean and orderly, as could possibly be. Originally, the heads of the different departments were Europeans, but at present the situations are nearly all filled by natives, who rose under their instruction, or were educated in France or England; among these was the principal mathematical instrument-maker, a very intelligent young man. How very fluently, and with what a good accent, many of these speak our language! There is an extensive rope-walk, and we saw some of the cables being worked by a patent machine: the head of this department is a Spaniard, but there is also a native fully capable of conducting the work. I was much struck with the skill and neatness of several of the workmen, particularly in brass-turning, carving, &c. We were shown a handsome room for the drawings, plans, engine-work, &c., and several models of the crack English vessels.

There is a mosque in the yard, whither the men go three times a day to pray, for about five or ten minutes. It is a small but neat building, covered with clematis, and other creepers, now in blow, and has a pretty fountain attached to it, where the men perform their ablutions each time they go to worship. All the workmen are enlisted in the Pasha's service as sailors or soldiers, and are drilled occasionally, so as to be capable of almost immediate service. They are fed, clothed, and get from fifteen to

thirty piastres a month pay, which they, and all the men in the service of Mohammed Ali, receive into their own hands, to prevent any sort of peculation. The wages of these artisans are raised according to their merit, and are never in the same arrear as those of the army or navy. The greater number are married, their wives inhabiting wretched hovels outside the town; if they have sons, each receives fifteen piastres a month from the government, and the child must be brought to receive it in his own hand. Their wives are all in some sort of traffic or huckstering, and tend much to the support of their husbands; so that the more wives a soldier or tradesman in Alexandria has, the better he lives! The majority have a plurality, and if sons are the result, it is a rather good speculation.

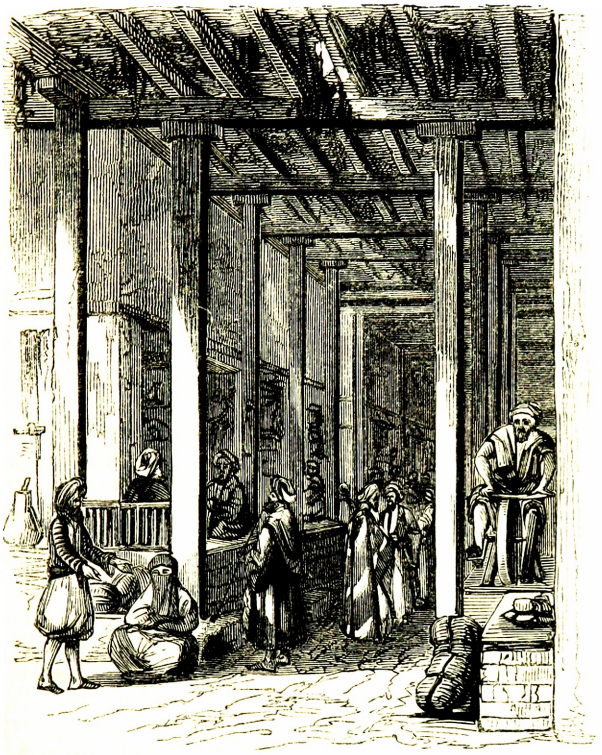
The men work from sunrise to sunset, with the exception of an hour at breakfast and dinner; they get three meals a day, and during our visit the drum beat to the mid-day meal, which consists of a plentiful supply of coarse brown bread and bean porridge; and for breakfast they are allowed, in addition, olives, with some vinegar and oil. All the artisans are given meat once a week, and the troops once a month. They are divided into messes of three and five each. The greatest order and quiet prevailed, and if the countenance be an index of the inner man, contentment seemed to reign amongst them. The anchors, and most of the foreign goods in the dock-yard, are English; and there were also a vast number of fine brass and metal guns, in most perfect preservation, lately fished up in Aboukir Bay.

I next day visited one of the vessels of war, No. 8, along with its surgeon, an Englishman, whose salary of £10 a month and rations, consisting of beans and brown bread, although equal to the ordinary expenses of a country where necessaries are so cheap, is yet insufficient inducement to any number of well-educated English medical men to enter the service of the Pasha; and consequently, with the exception of the professors at Cairo, and those filling higher stations, the general run of European medical men in the service are ignorant and uneducated Italians and Frenchmen.

I found this vessel, and others that I visited, particularly clean and orderly, and this is the more marked, as there is a greater quantity of brass inlaying and ornamental work in them than is usual in any of our men-of-war. This is a 100-gun ship, but equal in tonnage to ours carrying 120. The uniform is a dark brown, and the officers are principally distinguished from the men by the fineness of the regimentals, and having an anchor, star, or crescent, emblematic of their rank, and composed of silver, gold, or jewels, on the left breast. In the navy as well as the army, neither beard nor whiskers are allowed; except the mustache, all must be close-shaven daily; this at first was considered a very great innovation, and was loudly complained of as quite too Christian and uncircumcised a form. Precisely the contrary has recently taken place in France, where the judges have refused to suffer the lawyers to plead in mustaches, though beards are allowed, legal wisdom being supposed to reside all below the mouth.

The men are trained to military tactics, as well as to go aloft, and in this latter they are often very clumsy, to the no small amusement of any English tars who may be lowering top-gallants, or reefing topsails at the same time.

But much cannot be expected from a navy called into existence since the battle of Navarino, and whose service has consisted in little else than a great summer visit to Candia. There is a moolah, or priest, on board each ship. The men are not allowed to smoke in watches, and a certain number each night are permitted to go to their families, who live near the town. There was an air of great simplicity in the officers' berths, even in that of the



Principal Bazaar, Alexandria.

captain; a plain divan surrounded two sides of the cabin—a table with writing materials, and a couple of chairs, and on the side of each was hung a plain glazed frame, in which was written the name of God, and sometimes a verse of the Koran underneath. From a desire to avoid even the appearance of any "graven image," there are no figure-heads to any of the Egyptian vessels. There is a naval academy at Alexandria, where the young officers are instructed; a noble establishment, having accommodation for 1200 students.*

Though the bazaars of Alexandria, compared with those of some other

* Wilde.

Oriental cities, may be regarded as insignificant, they have still preserved much of their Eastern character, and therefore deserve to be visited by the traveller; at least if he arrive from Europe. This was my case; and they accordingly possessed much novelty for me. At Cairo, Constantinople, Ispahan, Kandahar, Shikarpore, and other great cities of the Mohammedan world, the bazaars are of vast extent, and make a display of riches scarcely to be looked for in countries so ill governed, and so little civilised. But the commercial capital of Egypt is approximating more and more every day in appearance to a Frank city. All the traders of the place are now by no means found in the bazaars. Shops of every kind are springing up in other quarters. These, kept, many of them, by our Maltese subjects, whose indefatigable industry is proverbial in the Levant, or by Greeks or Italians, contain a respectable assortment of European goods, mercery, drapery, cutlery, china, glass, &c. Except as signs of progress in civilisation, however, such shops command little notice from the stranger. His attention is directed to the place where the native buyers and sellers congregate, as it necessarily presents many characteristics of the people and the country.

The buildings which in England go under the name of bazaars in no respect resemble those of the East, which consist of a number of narrow streets covered above, generally crossing each other at right angles, and having on each side shops open in front, like the booths in a country fair, with floors raised about three feet and a half above the level of the pavement, projecting a yard or so beyond the wall of the house into the street, and forming a broad bench, which, joining with that of the next tenement, extends the whole length of the bazaar. Both the bench and the floor are covered with neat mats or carpets, and the walls with deep shelves, divided into large compartments, in which the various kinds of merchandise are arranged with little attention to display. The shopkeeper, with nargeel or chibouque in his mouth, sits cross-legged on the bench in front of his wares. When a customer presents himself, he lays aside his pipe, receives him with a smile and a bow, but continues sitting. The salaam is given and returned. A sort of conversation is then set on foot. When the parties are nearly of the same rank the dialogue commences pretty much as follows: "In the name of God is your house well?"—"*Kater khe roubene.*"—"Thank God it is well."—"And *your* house?"—"The same."—"*Fih sakkar?*"—"Have you any sugar?"—"*Mafish*—There is none."—"*Wallah! Mafish?*"—"By God have you none?"—"Wallah!"—"By God!" The customer then inquires perhaps for some other article; the merchant, a name generally affected even by the most humble dealer, treats him to a whiff from his pipe; they smoke and talk together for an hour, after which the buyer strolls on leisurely to some other shop. In these narrow and crowded passages, while prying into the mystery of buying and selling, the safety of your head is frequently endangered by the passage of a string of loaded camels which go shuffling along with burdens of grass, or vast panniers, reaching nearly across the street. The appearance and arrangement of the shops often recall to one's mind the descriptions in the "Arabian Nights." Here the barber, the draper, the money-changer, the jeweller, and even the

schoolmaster, exercise their various arts and mysteries in the view of the public, and all, to judge from their appearance, conduct their business with a dignity and self-satisfaction which must contribute greatly to their general happiness.

The provision markets of Alexandria are almost always as well furnished as the best in Africa. There are various kinds of meat, fresh and dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, fowls, game, fish in abundance, very good bread, eggs, and milk. The country round about produces very little, being surrounded with a desert; but the productions of Rosetta, and all Lower Egypt, the borders of Syria, the islands of the Archipelago, and the African coast to Derna, are brought to the city, without interruption, in little boats; so that, in regard to provisions, this town has everything that could be wished for.*

* Ali Bey.

Tree of the Pilgrims, and Aqueduct, Alexandria.

CHAPTER IV.

SHEIKH IBRAHIM.—CASTLE OF THE PHAROS.—PASHA'S BARK.

MOHAMMED ALI is said recently to have made some progress towards the abolition of the slave-trade in his country; and may success attend his efforts, if he really make any! I fancy, however, that very little has hitherto been done: at all events, when I was in the country, slaves were as common in that part of the bazaar appropriated to the flagitious traffic as Manchester piece goods, though the supply on hand depended on the irregular arrivals of Kafilas from the interior. It is still moreover reported that his highness looks with a sort of Janus-face upon the slave trade, frowning with the one which is turned towards Europe, but with the one turned towards Africa smiling and encouraging the slave hunts. I was indebted to accident for my knowledge of the manner in which the traffic in slaves is transacted. Groping my way one morning through some of the dirtiest and darkest parts of the city, my servant, assuming a most comical grin, ushered me suddenly through a small-arched passage into a filthy gloomy court, little removed in wretchedness from an Irish pound. On entering, about a dozen or two young creatures of both sexes, but principally girls, perfectly black, and with scarcely a rag of covering on them, rushed tumultuously out of the low dens by which the court was surrounded, wondering at my Frank dress, and particularly delighted at the sight of a dead flamingo I carried in my hand, and which they seemed to recognise as an old acquaintance, these birds being very plentiful in the Dongola country, from whence most of these slaves are brought. So sudden and unexpected was my *entrée*, and so very strange the scene, that I almost forgot where I was, till an involuntary start awoke me from my reverie, as one of the slave-dealers, a most kidnapping-looking scoundrel, stepped up and inquired if I wished to become a purchaser. I did not, because I dared not, knock the fellow down.

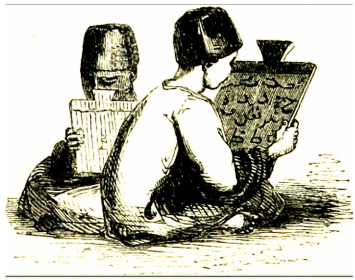
The greater number of these slaves are girls from ten to fifteen years of age, and generally bought for household servants. They seem quite unconscious of a situation which Christians look upon as so degrading. These young ladies, although nearly in a state of nature, had all necklaces and bracelets of blue beads—had their hair plaited in small twists, and were already beginning to assume the modesty of Mohammedan women, and attempted to cover their faces while the rest of their persons was wholly devoid of garments.*

On another occasion I found a wholly different class of girls for sale. They were of a bright, warm, copper colour, and beautifully formed, though their countenances were far from handsome. From what part of Africa they came the slave-merchant either could not or would not explain. Negresses it would be improper to denominate them, though their crisp and

* Wilde.

curly hair, the thickness of their lips, and the peculiar conformation of their heads, appear to denote their affinity to the negro family of mankind. The cells in which they habitually sat looked gloomy and squalid, but the young women themselves were scrupulously clean in their persons. Clothes of any description they had none, their only defence from the cold being the mats which closed the entrance to their dormitories, and the rugs and blankets, rolled in which they usually slept on the ground. It may here be remarked that the African slaves found at Alexandria are generally the refuse of the Egyptian market; for as the Kafilas enter from Nubia, the rich men in all the cities through which they pass enjoy the opportunity of making their purchases first. Sometimes, indeed, it happens that girls of more than ordinary beauty are reserved for the Cairo market, where the Pashas and opulent Turks habitually reside. In such cases, they are not exhibited at all in the cities of Upper Egypt, as Siout Girgeh and Manfalout, but kept concealed in separate enclosures. The Georgian, Circassian, and Mingrelian slaves, are never I believe brought to the bazaars at all, but kept in the houses of their owners, whither the men of rank proceed to view them.

Having heard much of one Sheikh Ibrahim, a popular Mohammedan preacher, distinguished at least as much for his fanaticism as for his eloquence, I one day paid him a visit. He resided in a wing of the principal mosque. He received us very politely, talked a great deal, and, among other things, inquired with much apparent interest about Sir Sidney Smith, whom he said he had known. He appeared to take a great liking to my beard, which he was fully persuaded must be a mark that I belonged to the caste of mufti or priests; nor, though we denied it, did he seem at all convinced, as the Mohammedans, having themselves little respect for truth, imagine that we Christians exactly resemble Ulysses in the accounts which we give of ourselves to strangers. When we seemed to have exhausted the Arabic of our interpreter, the old gentleman undertook to show us the Medressy, (school or college of the mosque,) and his own library, supposed to be the richest in Alexandria. In the appearance of the Medressy there was nothing remarkable, except that, instead of being seated on forms ranged regularly in the centre of the apartment, the boys were all squatted cross-legged upon a mat, with the pedagogue in the midst of them. In Egypt, Nubia, and, I believe, generally in Mohammedan countries, boys are taught to write upon a smooth thin tablet painted white, about the size of an ordinary ciphering-slate, with a handle at one end. From this the characters are easily effaced by washing. While studying, or rather learning to repeat, their lessons, each boy declaims his portion of the Koran aloud at the same time, rocking his body to and fro, in order, according to their theory, to assist his memory; and as every one seems desirous of



Schoolboys

drowning the voices of his companions, the din produced by so many shrill discordant notes reminds one of the "labourers of Babel."* They who wish to make any great advances in study, go to Cairo; but even here the most respectable sheikhs in the city give lectures in the principal mosques, which seem to diffuse instruction. The sheikh, when he delivers his lectures, is seated in the middle of the mosque upon a carpet, and the auditors form a circle at a distance round him; those who arrive in succession, form circles beyond, being all seated with the greatest regularity upon the ground. There is a little green candle placed upon a low table in the middle. Opposite the sheikh is seated a reader with papers in his hand. These papers contain generally the articles of the principal expounders of the Koran. The reader begins a verse, which he has hardly commenced, before he is interrupted by the sheikh, who comments upon it for a long or a short time, and occasionally makes the most extravagant commentaries upon a single word. The reader resumes his discourse, and the sheikh his remarks, speaking always as if he was inspired; now and then he introduces some agreeable sallies and *bon mots*.†

The library of Sheikh Ibrahim consisted of some six or seven hundred manuscripts, carelessly piled upon each other in an awkward kind of book-case, or strewed in a slovenly way about the floor. Several of those which we examined were beautifully written on fine parchment, and might, perhaps, be valuable. I wished to see a copy of the Koran. The time is past in which such a request could be regarded as imprudent; but the fanaticism and bigotry of Sheikh Ibrahim were well known, and it was foreseen that he would refuse, or escape from the dilemma by some ingenious evasion. Accordingly, he replied, that he would at that time show me the commentators on the sacred text; but that on some future day, when I should favour him with a second call, he would permit me to view the hallowed volume itself. He was next made to understand that it would give us great pleasure to be allowed to see the interior of the mosque. His excuse was ready: his *vakeel*, or deputy, who was entrusted with the keys of the edifice, was absent, and it was, therefore, out of his power to oblige us.

But, with the exception of the great mosque, and that of St. Sidi Abilabbas, the patron of the city, whose tomb is in one of the chapels, there are no mosques in Alexandria worth mentioning. It is remarkable that the ground-floor of the greater part of the mosques contains shops, store-houses, and dwellings. I perceived an addition in the form of their worship, which I had not previously remarked in the East. Before the commencement of the prayers on Friday, several singers recite some verses in the choir; an old man afterwards walks to the foot of the preacher's pulpit, and takes in his hand a sort of cross or long stick, and, turning towards the people, says in a nasal trembling tone of voice, as if he were going to give up the ghost, "Allahu Akbar, Allahu Akbar," and the choristers sing the same words twice; after which the old man continues the whole form of the call, which the former repeat verse after verse in singing. At length the old man, in a low voice, repeats a sentence from the Koran, in which the Friday's prayer is recommended; then, laying aside his stick, he goes away, and the imam

* Lane. † Ali Bey.

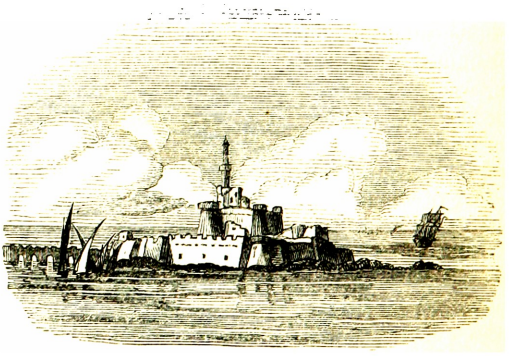
begins his sermon. This small addition, which is practised in all the mosques of Alexandria, is imposing, inasmuch as it gives to the worship a degree of seriousness.*

Many curious anecdotes are related at Alexandria of our friend Sheikh Ibrahim, who is a determined enemy of Mohammed Ali, and constantly holds up, in his sermons, all his innovations and improvements to public execration. Some years ago, when his highness's power was less firmly established than it is now, Sheikh Ibrahim contrived to excite a popular commotion, by constantly preaching on a subject equalling in importance the ground of controversy between the Big-endians and the Little-endians commemorated by Swift. It would appear that, about the period alluded to, that penetrating people the Jews, ever intent on turning the penny, had monopolised the butchering trade throughout Alexandria; so that however grateful, as the Cairo almanack affirms, it might be to eat mutton-chops, no pious Mussulman could enjoy this honest gratification, without the secret drawback of knowing that the animal, on whose unfortunate remains he was regaling himself, had been slaughtered by a Yahoodi with a knife having only three nails in the handle; whereas it is an acknowledged fact that no Mohammedan, who fears God and honours the Prophet, should ever taste of animal food not killed with a knife having five nails in the handle, and with the head turned towards Mecca; a circumstance which it was not to be expected that a misbelieving Yahoodi should attend to. Against this enormity Sheikh Ibrahim lifted up his voice; and so cogent and convincing were his arguments, that the people trembling on the brink of perdition, on account of the sin of the three-nailed knife-handles, and knowing no other mode of putting a stop to it, burst into a furious insurrection. Mohammed Ali, who had all the while been aware of the preacher's declamation, was now constrained to exercise his authority, and the orator was exiled to Tunis; upon which the people, each fearing a similar or worse fate, were quickly cured of the fever of fanaticism. For some years Sheikh Ibrahim remained quiet in his place of banishment; but, bigot as he was, the love of home at length prevailed over his intemperate zeal, and he caused it to be represented to the Pasha, that if his highness would grant him permission to return, the butchers might slaughter their victims with any sort of knife whatsoever; nor would he any longer concern himself as to whether, in its last moments, a sheep had its head or its tail towards Mecca. But the Pasha refrained from taking the slightest notice of his application. At length an English ship of war touching at Tunis on its way to Egypt, the preacher, now thoroughly humbled, sued for permission to proceed to Alexandria under the protection of the British flag. His request being readily granted, on his safe arrival he invited the captain to dine with him at his own house, where our countryman found a numerous party of Turks assembled, and spent a very agreeable day with his grateful host. When the hour of parting arrived, Sheikh Ibrahim led his guest aside, and, taking a large bag of dollars from under his garment, put it into his hands, begging that he would accept it as a token of his gratitude. Surprised and not displeased at this proof of good feeling in such a fanatic,

* Ali Bey.

the Englishman endeavoured to make him understand that it was inconsistent with the character of a gentleman to accept of a pecuniary reward for an act of kindness performed through mere humanity; but his arguments were thrown away: the Mussulman, ignorant of the refined casuistry of civilised nations, insisted that "one good turn deserved another," observing that as Europeans in general appeared to value gold above all things, he was persuaded that his money was refused from the belief that he was poor. "If that be your reason," said he, "let it no longer deter you. I am rich; I have bags of gold: you have saved me from pining to death in exile: you have behaved towards me like a brother by the way; I have more money than I need; and Wallah! by God you shall share it."—"You are a fine fellow," replied the captain, pushing aside the bag with his hand; "and it rejoices me exceedingly to think I have been of service to you; but for your money, by God! I will not touch a piastre of it."

Among the many attractive objects in Alexandria and its vicinity, the most interesting perhaps is the Castle of the Pharos, which, even under the liberal government of Mohammed Ali, has never, I believe, been visited by any Christian traveller but myself. Lord Belmore, when in Egypt, was positively refused admittance; Mr. Barker, the British Consul-General, during the whole period of his residence, used his official influence with no better success; several British and foreign merchants in the highest favour with the Pasha, who had lived, many of them twenty years, at Alexandria, had never been able to obtain the slightest glimpse of the interior of this fortress. Such being the case, I can only attribute my better fortune to the caprice of his Highness, who perhaps desired on this occasion to show, that, when he thought proper, he could grant to the humble and untitled stranger what he had habitually refused to rank and official claims. My principal reason for desiring to view the spot was the belief that I might possibly discover there some traces of the famous lighthouse, once enumerated among the seven wonders of the world. Norden supposed that some fragments of it might be still remaining in his time; and more modern writers also have entertained the same belief. Indeed it seems somewhat difficult to imagine, that of so magnificent a structure as the Pharos, which we know to have been still existing in the thirteenth century,* no portion whatsoever should have escaped the rage of time and barbarism. Some



Castle of the Pharos. Old Harbour of Alexandria.

* Abd-el-Attif.

idea of its grandeur and dimensions may be formed from the following passage:—

"On various headlands and promontories of the ancient world, beacon-fires were habitually kindled to guide the course of the ships into port; in after-ages, lighthouses, adorned with every beauty of architecture, and carried to a vast height, were substituted. Of these, the most remarkable was that erected for Ptolemy Philadelphos, by Sostratos, the Cnidian, whose name, by permission of the king, was inscribed upon the structure. By one author it is described as 450 feet high, and equal in dimensions at the base to one of the great pyramids of Memphis. In form it may possibly have resembled the Harem-el-Kedâb, which consists of a series of square towers from the basement upwards, diminishing in size, and appearing to spring up out of each other. With this the language of Strabo very well agrees, since he tells us it was a building consisting of numerous stages. On the summit bright fires were kept perpetually burning, so that on that low shore, where there is no hill or mountain for many days' journey, the Pharos was ever the first object which presented itself to mariners at sea, where its light, we are told, was visible at the distance of 100 miles. Occasionally, however, from its great size and brilliancy, it was mistaken for the moon, as this planet itself, rising behind the domes and towers of a great capital, has suggested to distant beholders the idea of a conflagration."* The Arabs pretend that there was on the top of the Pharos a huge mirror, so marvellously constructed, that you might behold represented on its surface the image of all ships which issued from the ports of Greece.

Several gentlemen, anxious to take advantage of the Pasha's extraordinary act of courtesy, requested permission to accompany me, which I very readily granted, not foreseeing that I thus ran the risk of being excluded myself. It was a fine clear morning, the wind blowing gently from the sea. Impatient to enjoy the anticipated pleasure, we sipped our coffee hastily, and, attended by a superior officer from the palace, mounted our beasts, and proceeded hastily towards the place of attraction. On arriving at the entrance of that long narrow causeway, carried over an artificial foundation from the mainland to the islet, where the celebrated lighthouse stood, the soldiers on duty at first refused admittance even to the Pasha's representative, considering it incredible that Franks should have received his highness's sanction to enter this military sanctuary. But the officer, irritated at their fanatical intolerance and want of respect for his authority, menacing them with the punishment awarded to disobedience of orders, they reluctantly made way. The road now lay between two high walls, which cut off the view on either side, but the sound of the waves dashing against the rocks informed us we were surrounded by the sea. On reaching the gates of the castle, fresh difficulties occurred. The governor, a Turk of rank and distinction, informed us, that in addition to his general orders, he had received private instructions to admit no strangers under any pretext whatever; but the bearer of his highness's peremptory commands replied—"On my head be it;" at the same time placing his hand upon his

* History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece.

turban: upon which the governor, making a low bow, allowed us to advance.

Passing the drawbridge we entered the court of the castle, under an immense portcullis, between long files of soldiers, drawn up on either side the gateway. Traversing this area, which is of spacious dimensions, and mounting the platform, we examined the guns, mortars, bombs, and piles of ball, which meet the eye on all sides. The parapet, of unusual height and thickness, is cased, like the platform, with prodigious blocks of stone. A lower line of fortifications, erected by the Pasha, encircles the castle; and its guns, when the works are completed, will be nearly on a level with the surface of the water. These, I imagine, would do more execution than those above. From the entire absence of breakers, the sea, it may be inferred, is of considerable depth, so that it is probable ships of war might approach almost close to the guns. No portion of the islet is at present uncovered; whatever remains of the Pharos it may formerly have contained have therefore been buried beneath the foundations of the fortress.

The castle is a large square lofty building, surmounted by a lighthouse, in the shape of a minaret. Ascending to its summit by a narrow winding staircase, we enjoyed a magnificent prospect over the quarantine harbour, the palace on the Cape of Figs, and a large portion of Alexandria. Numerous ships, with their white sails bellying before the wind, were visible in the offing. Here and there, between the Pharos and the Pharillon, and along the shores towards Aboukir Bay, the existence of numerous sunken rocks is indicated by breakers incessantly dashing over them in snow-white foam. A view very different in character was commanded from this spot in the time of the Ptolemies, when each harbour was crowded with elegant Greek galleys, and the shore, as far as the eye could reach, lined with obelisks, palaces, and temples. On descending from the roof, we entered a small mosque in the centre of the building, in which the soldiers of the garrison perform their devotions. An extraordinary revolution has been effected since the year 1819, when the Christians, according to a former traveller, were turned away with insult from the fortress, for now a Christian, having examined at his leisure the military portion of the structure, entered into the mosque in his boots, under the guidance of a Turkish officer. These advantages we owe to the enlightened tolerance of Mohammed Ali, who is perseveringly, though quietly, proceeding with the destruction of those prejudices which interrupt the free intercourse of Turk and Christian. Failing in our attempt at discovering any remains of antiquity in this island, we returned towards the promontory of *Ras-el-Tyn*, and passing between the Pasha's harem and divan, entered the fort, where files of infantry under arms were drawn up on either side, as at the castle. The habitations of the soldiers extend round a spacious area, containing several large cisterns, excavated in the rock, which, when it is judged necessary, are probably filled from the Mahmoodiyah by camels; but they were now entirely dry. The service magazine is found, I imagine, at the northern extremity of the quadrangle, where a handsome colonnade perhaps conceals the entrance to it. Proceeding beyond the fort, over the rocks, which here project considerably into the waves, I endeavoured to discover some trace

of the numerous edifices formerly found on this island, where many persons suppose the Pharos itself to have been situated; for Cæsar describes a village as existing on the same cluster of rocks with the lighthouse. A few brick substructions and fragments of pottery were all that rewarded my search. The fort itself is ill-constructed, and in many places crumbling to decay; the walls having been shattered by the firing of the guns on occasion of public rejoicing. In its form there is nothing remarkable, the bastions advancing and receding in a series of obtuse angles. The guns are mounted on old decayed carriages, and not numerous; the whole number, both here and in the castle, not exceeding 160. Close under the walls of the harem is a battery, which the officer feared to show us, lest, the windows of the sacred apartments being open, any of us should commit the unpardonable indiscretion of regarding the ladies. However, at our desire he ventured farther perhaps than was prudent; but finding nothing to reward our search, the scrutiny was not carried far. A low rampart of sand-bags had been thrown up along the beach, flanked by numerous guns.

Our next visit was to the Pasha's salt-water baths, situated in the sea, below the palace, on the western side of Ras-el-Tin. They consist of a large low edifice, resting on several rows of pillars, and constructed entirely of wood. A narrow wooden causeway, extending from the shore to the esplanade, leads to the entrance, which, being surrounded with clear water, and rendered exquisitely cool by the sea-breezes, forms a most agreeable retreat during the heats of summer. Entering the building, and leaving a spacious saloon, the walls and roof of which are tastefully decorated, we arrived at the principal bath, where a low flight of steps descends to the water, which is of moderate depth, and so beautifully clear, that every pebble in the bottom is visible. A narrow corridor, with neat railings, extends round the apartment; pillars, disposed at regular intervals, support the roof; and at each of the four corners is a diminutive aviary for a number of singing-birds. Arranged along the pillars is a series of rose-leaves in bronze, curled and hollow, in which the birds may build their nests. From the centre of the glazed cupola depends a magnificent chandelier, which in the evening, when the ladies of the harem generally bathe, casts a dazzling splendour over the waters; and on these occasions, when a number of beautiful forms are seated unadorned in those cool refreshing recesses, sporting in the waves, talking, laughing, singing, or listening to some wild tale related by their handmaidens, the fictions of the Arabian Nights appear to be realised. The female bath occupies the centre of the edifice, and is surrounded by a long suite of dressing-rooms, elegantly furnished, where, after bathing, the ladies sip coffee or sherbet, seated on English chairs, or reposing on soft divans, while they are shampooed, fanned, or perfumed with essences by their women. In all these apartments the divans, though tasteful and elegant, are less sumptuous than in the palaces of Cairo, being covered with gay chintzes of Egyptian manufacture. The windows in general are fitted up with ground glass. On the northern side of the building is the children's bath, resembling the larger one in form, but more plainly fitted up, and containing shallower water. At the western part, facing the harbour, is a large open verandah, with seats, where the Pasha

smokes and amuses himself in the summer evenings, by observing the ships entering or leaving the port. A narrow gallery, furnished with showy railings, surrounds the exterior of the baths.

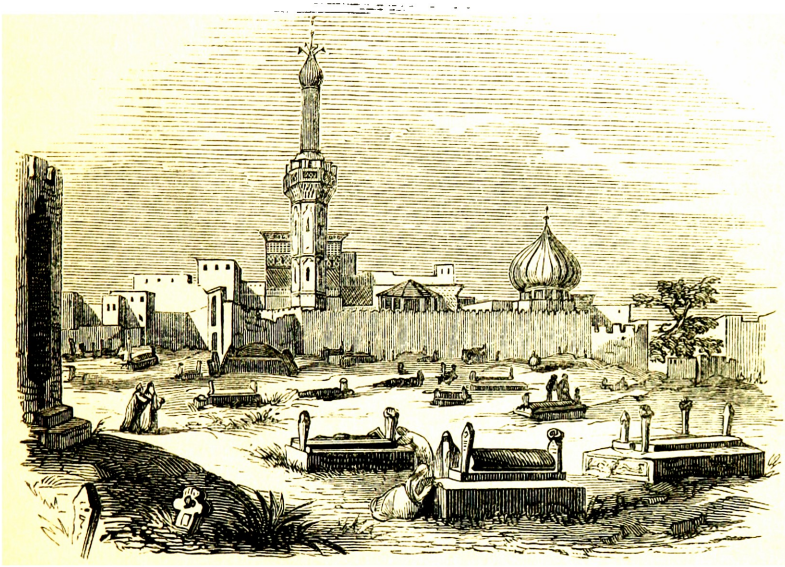
When the Duke of Ragusa visited Alexandria, he found the forts Caffarelli and Kom-el-Dyck nearly in the condition in which they were left when the French were driven out of Egypt by the English thirty years before. They had been constructed under his own orders; and with the proud feelings of an old soldier, who had distinguished himself on many a well-fought field, he probably regarded their freshness and fine preservation as emblematic of his own glory. He ran through them eagerly, looked down from their ramparts over the city, which had changed so much; and in the tumultuous state of his feelings missed nothing but the palisades which had once extended along the works. A closer scrutiny might have disclosed to him the fact, that Time had not, as he supposed, been quite idle there. No doubt the climate of Egypt, even to its most northern limit, is favourable to the preservation of monuments of all kinds; but rains and storms sometimes visit Alexandria, and both the celebrated forts in question were some years ago considerably the worse for their visitations. When I saw Fort Caffarelli, it contained a small cistern, and a few houses in which lodge the last of the famous Turkish gunners, many of whom are now deaf. The guns, which appeared to be about forty-eight pounders, are six in number, and without platforms. There were also two ten-inch mortars, directed towards the town. The shot and shells lay about in confusion. The ramparts are sand, and half-riveted with masonry; but the whole has been suffered to go to decay; and by means of the neighbouring buildings, hills, and hollows, it may be approached the whole way up under cover. Achmed Chelebi, who has the superintendence of the repairs, is engaged in renewing the drawbridge; but the ditch is nearly filled up. Wooden platforms are making. It possesses a species of covered way, but this likewise had been nearly overwhelmed by *débris* from the ramparts above. The neighbourhood, however, abounds with materials for all the requisite repairs, so that it might be easily converted into a respectable post.

Mohammed Ali would, no doubt, have put this and all other parts of the fortifications of Alexandria in thorough repair, had the apprehensions of war with England, experienced during our operations in Syria, been of longer duration. Indeed much, it is said, was actually done during the first paroxysm of fear. But he grievously deceived himself if he supposed that, with any improvements he could have effected, his maritime capital would have been able to oppose any lengthened resistance to our arms; and probably the fate of St. Jean d'Acre enlightened his mind on this point.

CHAPTER V.

THE CATACOMBS.—CHARACTER OF MOHAMMED ALI.

THE manner of interment prevalent among ancient nations, more particularly in the East, was far better calculated than that which now obtains in Europe to reconcile the imagination to the sepulchre. In the vicinity of



Cemetery of Alexandria.

all great cities there was another city inhabited by the dead. And how serene and solemn was its aspect! Thither the living might repair, when desirous to subdue and soften their minds, and in the gloom of twilight, or beneath the calm radiance of the moon, imbibe the chastening influence of the place. No spot in the whole valley of the Nile seemed so sweet or beautiful to me as the abodes of the dead. There, the Egyptian sleeps with his fathers; there, distant generations have been brought together; there, the subjects of the Pharaohs, ay, and the Pharaohs themselves, slumber calmly in odoriferous coffins, in spacious but dark halls, adorned nevertheless with paintings as gorgeous and elaborate as though the eye were expected to dwell on them daily in the most brilliant light.

Most travellers seem to have experienced more or less pleasure in exploring the tombs of Egypt. It is universally felt that they are "the houses prepared for all living." Of this feeling I have always, perhaps,

experienced more than my share; and consequently, among the earliest inquiries which I made on entering any Egyptian city was that which regarded the way to the tombs. But, properly to enjoy so solemn a delight, one must seek it in Upper Egypt, and, if not altogether alone, yet certainly accompanied by few. At Alexandria such an arrangement is scarcely possible. If you have friends or acquaintances, they will insist on accompanying you to the Catacombs, and it would appear highly ungracious to reject their hospitable attentions. I was fortunate enough to meet with many there who took a warm interest in my movements, and of these the greater number made up a party expressly for the purpose of exploring with me the principal excavations of the Necropolis.

We were attended by a janissary, a kawass from the palace, and a number of donkey-boys; all such excursions being performed on asses. It was one of those beautiful winter days which seem peculiar to Egypt, when the sun's heat is so tempered by the sea-breezes that it is rather refreshing than oppressive. The landscape, though divested of all those charms arising in other lands from mountains, running streams, and luxuriant vegetation, was clothed in beauties altogether its own, which, whether intrinsically of a picturesque character or not, affected the imagination no less powerfully than alpine snow and mountain cataracts. Words can represent but indistinctly the characteristic peculiarities of such a scene. We were treading on the verge of the boundless desert of Libya, that mysterious portion of our globe, the nature and exact extent of which are hitherto unknown, and whose skirts a scanty number of hardy adventurers have passed hastily with fear and trembling, while the simoom, the whirlwind, the sand-storm, and the fierce inhospitable Bedouins, hovered around their path. A secret reference to ideas of this kind imparted to the rocky and barren wilderness an aspect of savage grandeur not properly, perhaps, belonging to it; though the drifted sand-heaps, of all forms and dimensions, with the traces of the hurricane still fresh upon them; the gaping mouths of innumerable sepulchres profaned and rifled of their dead; the rocks fretted to honey-comb by the everlasting action of the waves; the deep, deep blue sea, the stainless sky, the silence, the solitude, the utter desolation visible on all sides, necessarily produced an impressive effect upon the mind. From time to time, as we looked towards the desert, we discovered a single Bedouin, on a laden camel, moving, afar in the distance, across the plain, which only appeared to render us the more sensible of the sterility and forlorn condition of this unblessed land.

We rode leisurely along the rocky shore, among the crumbling remains of the Necropolis, which have in many places been broken up, and the fragments employed in the erection of the neighbouring forts. At length we arrived at the entrance to the catacombs, which faces the sea, and, during the prevalence of high north winds, must be filled with the spray and foam of the waves. It at present resembles the mouth of a quarry; but I make no doubt there were formerly a dromos or court, a portico, a corridor, and all the regular appendages of an Egyptian hypogeum. Lord Lindsay seems to have made his way into the catacombs by some other opening, because he and his companions took much pains, he says, to dis-

cover the grand entrance, which he conjectures must have been from the shore. There could however, I think, have been no other than that through which we passed, at once spacious and lofty, in all respects suitable to the chambers within.

In the great hall, or vestibule, we threw aside our burnooses, or Arab cloaks, and having lighted our wax tapers, proceeded with eager curiosity to the examination of the interior. The apartment into which we passed from the vestibule is of vast dimensions, and communicates, on the left, with another, smaller, and provided with three recesses for coffins. On the right is a very large saloon, with a circular roof, which, by the illusion of sculpture, seems to spring up into a dome. From this, which has been dignified, I know not wherefore, with the appellation of "state-room," numerous passages branch off in different directions, leading through the rock to various other chambers of inferior dimensions. These passages are in many places filled up with earth nearly to the roof, so that you creep along with difficulty; in others, the surface of the ruins and rubbish sinks so low as to allow of your standing upright; while, from time to time, you find deep holes, descending, perhaps, to the original floor. There are two suites of chambers; the one running in a southerly, the other in a westerly direction. I pushed on through the latter; and, notwithstanding the intricacy of the passages, the extreme lowness of the roof in some places, and the heat, which very much resembled that of an oven, succeeded in reaching what appeared to be the extremity of the hypogeum towards the west; but in all this long succession of rooms I saw only one niche. When we had arrived at what seemed to be the end of the catacomb, we observed that the rock was jagged and broken, like the side of a natural cavern; and it is possible that, between these rough projections, some straight passage, not discoverable by the faint light of our two tapers, may exist, leading still farther westward. On returning towards the entrance, we found some of our party engaged in examining a small opening which seemed to have been recently broken in the rocky partition, and was at first supposed to lead to an upper suite of chambers; but having, with much difficulty, forced in my head and the upper part of my body, I discovered it to be nothing but a diminutive sepulchral cell, from which the mummy and sarcophagus, if it ever contained any, had been removed. Besides this western suite of rooms, there seemed, as I have already observed, to be another, branching off towards the south; for a low narrow passage, carefully cut in the rock, conducted, we could not doubt, to other apartments; though our Arab guide assured us gravely that it extended beneath the desert all the way to Cairo, and asserted that he had crept along through it for several hours without meeting with a single chamber. Had we followed this opening, we might, perhaps, have arrived in a few minutes at apartments similar to those we had traversed; but the heat was oppressive; and our curiosity beginning to be satisfied,—for every new chamber seemed exactly to resemble that which had preceded it, so that nothing appeared likely to be gained by pushing our researches any farther,—we therefore turned round, and proceeded towards daylight; while our scattered companions, many with candles in their hands, through distant chambers, now

appearing and now disappearing in the dark passages, or behind the angles of the rocks, resembled so many phantoms. Numerous writers have marked their names upon the walls, which, like Pompey's Pillar, are daily more and more disfigured by this vulgar ambition.

On emerging into the open air, we found it exceedingly keen and cold; but yet proceeded to examine what are vulgarly called Cleopatra's Baths, consisting of three contiguous excavations in the rock, on the western side of a large artificial basin, into which the sea enters by a narrow opening. They are somewhat difficult of access, unless approached through the water, which is beautifully clear, and by no means deep. A low divan, cut in the rock, surrounds these chambers, the largest of which may be about ten or twelve feet long, and eight or ten broad. Two are lighted from without; but the other is quite dark; and the noise produced within by the roaring of the waves is loud and almost incessant. They have been hewn with considerable care; and, though it would be difficult to believe that the voluptuous and beautiful wife of Ptolemy Dionysius ever bathed in these rocky, sequestered chambers, they may have contained no less beautiful forms, when they had been rendered cold and rigid by death. In fact, from their situation and vicinity to the tombs, it is probable that they were appropriated to the washing of dead bodies previous to their being embalmed. Behind, likewise cut in the rock, are two other apartments, warm and dry, where all the subsequent process of embalming may have been performed.

One has no leisure to be ill while engaged in travelling. The excitement of the imagination produced by a constant succession of new objects, imparts a force to the frame which enables it to triumph awhile over disease or fatigue. Still the seasoning fever which ushers most persons to the pleasures of Egypt did not entirely spare me, and I was labouring under a slight attack of it when I paid my first visit to the garden of Ibrahim Pasha. The road, running along the naked shore, was bleak and dreary, and exposed to the north-west wind, which blew so keen and cold, that our thick Arab cloaks were scarcely sufficient to protect us from its bitterness. The gardens, formerly a mere expanse of sand, are surrounded by a hedge of lofty reeds, which, when full-grown, will form an excellent fence, impervious to the sight. The ground is laid out in large square compartments or beds, somewhat in the French style of gardening; and these are divided from each other by numerous broad walks, bordered on either side with rows of acacias, mimosas, and peach and orange-trees. At the extremity of the gardens, near the water-wheel, there is a neat kiosk, with a terrace before it, commanding a fine view over the whole breadth of the Mareotic Lake, the canal, and the magnificent expanse of verdure produced by the new plantations which adorn this part of the vicinity of Alexandria. These gardens, it is supposed, are intended to be always left open to the public. A few small flowers, the last of the year, were blooming near the water-wheel. They were of a brilliant colour, but their odour was faint, barely sufficient to awaken our regret at the absence of the spring. In this neighbourhood were situated the vineyards which produced the Mareotic wine, celebrated by several of the ancients.

An Armenian gentleman, who had travelled much in Europe, was engaged, at the period to which these pages refer, in laying out extensive vineyards on the site apparently of those celebrated of old. Of the numerous varieties of the vine known in Europe he had imported between forty and fifty, which appeared to like the soil and to thrive well in it. This example has since been followed by many others. All the plantations I saw to the best advantage in the following spring, when every bush and tree was in full leaf. The unusually copious rains of the preceding winter had, in fact, clothed the surrounding plains and eminences with verdure. Among the plants that here flourish, during a short period, is the *ghassoul*, of which fifteen thousand quintals are annually collected by the government, the ashes being used in the manufacture of salt. Viewed from any commanding height, the country now exhibits a luxuriant and smiling aspect, every green hollow and swelling undulation being sprinkled with wild flowers, impregnating the air with their short-lived fragrance. Here the ice-plant is found in great abundance on the sand-hills. Hitherto all attempts at naturalising fruit-trees have been found unsuccessful; for, after the sixth or seventh year, their roots descending, enter the sand impregnated with salt, upon which their topmost branches, it is said, immediately begin to decay, until about the twelfth year, when they perish entirely. Yet the Egyptian sycamore, in size equal to the oak, finds nutriment in a soil supposed to be destructive to other large trees.

The late Boghos Bey, who, though his whole life was spent in political intrigue, cherished a fondness for rural objects, possessed an elegant villa within the walls, surrounded by a large garden, containing a great variety of rare flowers, among which the most remarkable were the carnations, four feet high, the largest and finest, perhaps, in the world. Here I was shown an extraordinary fruit-tree, produced by an extremely ingenious process. They take three seeds—the citron, the orange, and the lemon—and carefully removing the external coating from both sides of one of them, and from one side of the two others, place the former between the latter, and binding the three together with fine grass, plant them in the earth. From this mixed seed springs a tree, the fruit of which exhibits three distinct species included within one rind, the division being perfectly visible externally, and the flavour of each compartment as different as if it had grown on a separate tree. This curious method of producing a tripartite fruit, was introduced by Boghos Yusuf, from Smyrna, his native city, where it is said to have been practised from time immemorial.

The site of Alexandria, between two lakes and the sea, is a dull desert of moving sand, which has no other vegetation than some large tufts of grass. But at a small depth, under the bed of sand, is a sheet of water; so that, wherever they dig, they find water more or less briny, and sometimes nearly drinkable. It is on this account that plantations of fig and palm trees, as also some melons, may be discovered on the side of Aboukir, where it would be thought impossible for anything to thrive. The horses bury themselves in the moving sand up to their bellies to enjoy the moisture. The way in which they plant their melons is as follows: they dig large ditches of forty-five or sixty feet in length, and eight or ten in depth, that cost little trouble

on account of the sand, which they prevent from falling in by giving an inclination to the sides of the ditches, which are by these means very wide at the upper part, and have only a foot in width at the bottom; where they sow a row of melon seeds throughout the whole length. The plants spring up and run over the sides of the ditch. As the roots find plenty of water early, the plants grow very vigorously. Every plantation consists of a number of these ditches parallel to each other. They cultivate some few vines in this manner.*

Before quitting Alexandria, I ought perhaps to give some short account of him who has imparted to it all its present prosperity. Much has already been written on him. Some having received favours at his hands, have thought it incumbent on them to cover him with flattery in return for his liberal treatment. Others again, either through attachment to the Turkish Sultan, or because they suppose themselves to have been personally injured or insulted by the Pasha, have indulged in the bitterest satire against both his character and measures. I shall not imitate either of these classes of writers. For, although Mohammed Ali showed me many civilities, some of which, as the admission into his harem and into the castle of the Pharos, might almost perhaps be termed favours, I cannot consent on that account to admire what my conscience tells me is wrong in his policy. I shall, therefore, speak of him as though he had conferred on me no obligation. He is a public man, and his character has already passed into the domain of history. All, consequently, that he can demand of any traveller is the plain truth, expressed as courteously as may be consistent with the complete statement of it.

Mohammed Ali is a man of middling stature, robust and stout in his make, exceedingly upright, and, for a man of his age, hale and active. His features, possessing more of the Tartar cast than is usual among European Turks, are plain, if not coarse; but they are lighted up with so much intelligence, and his dark gray eyes beam so brightly, that I should not be surprised if I found that persons familiar with his countenance thought him handsome. In dress he differs but little, if at all, from any other Turkish gentleman: he has, however, a certain dignity in his manner, which, in the estimation of many, even borders upon majesty. But this dignity seems almost inseparable from the possession of power: the man who can do much good or harm, whatever may be his stature, form, or features, will always appear to exhibit it: as the scorpion, in size no larger than a snail, is viewed with awe, because he is supposed to carry death in his sting.

The manner in which the Pasha spends his time is nearly as follows:— He sleeps very little. Europeans who have happened to repose in the same tent with him, while on a journey, complain of having been often disturbed in the night by his asking them questions, and afterwards continuing to talk on when they wished to sleep. He rises at or before daybreak; and, very shortly afterwards, leaves his harem on horseback, and repairs to his divan for the despatch of business. Here he receives all memorials, petitions, despatches, &c. Shortly after his arrival, the

* Ali Bey.

secretaries walk in with large bundles of letters, received since the day before, the contents of which are read to him. He then commands, and sketches out, *vivâ voce*, in a rapid manner, the necessary replies. Then the answers to letters and papers, ordered to be made on the preceding day, are brought in, and read to him by the secretaries; and when he has heard and approved of their contents, he orders his signet, which he delivers into their hands, to be affixed to them, while he generally paces up and down the room, turning over the matter in his mind, and probably deliberating whether there shall any postscript be added. This sort of business usually occupies him till about nine o'clock; at which hour all those consuls and other persons, who desire a public audience, arrive. In an hour or two these individuals take their leave; upon which he retires to his harem, where he remains till about three or half-past three in the afternoon. Even here, however, he is still employed; and his general orders are, that if any verbal message be forwarded to him, it is to be delivered to the chief of the eunuchs: but that, if any letter or note arrive, whether by day or night, he is to be immediately awakened from sleep. Boghos Yusuf often attends him in the harem for the despatch of important business. At half-past three o'clock he again returns to the divan; when,—except that the order of proceeding is reversed, as he first gives audience, and then enters into the affairs of the interior,—the same mode of business is gone through as in the morning. About an hour after sunset he takes a slight repast, and remains in the divan until ten or eleven o'clock at night. During these evening hours, he generally finds time for a game or two at chess, a person retained for the purpose being always in attendance to play with him; and this fellow, being his Highness's buffoon as well as companion in amusement, always affects to be inconsolable, and makes a sad outcry, when the pieces are taken from him.

Both the Pasha and his court are very plain at Alexandria; but at Cairo, where, however, he spends but a small portion of the year, things are conducted with more state, though he is everywhere extremely accessible. Any person who has leisure, and knows no better mode of employing it, may go every evening to the palace, whether he have business there or not, and, if he does not choose to force himself upon the notice of the Pasha, he can enter into any of the other magnificent apartments, which are lighted up as well as the audience-chamber, and converse, if he pleases, with some of the numerous company there assembled. To show his Highness's close habits of business, it has been remarked, that when accidentally indisposed at Alexandria, and compelled to take exercise in his carriage instead of on horseback, he is known constantly to take ou with him the public despatches. Driving to the banks of the canal, he has his carpet spread upon the ground; and there, while coffee is preparing, he usually sits reading and sealing his despatches. He will then enjoy his coffee and pipe, and afterwards return directly to the palace. This is one of his recreations. In the harem he reads, or has books read to him, or amuses himself by conversing with the abler of his eunuchs.

At other times he is employed in dictating his history, or in playing at chess, to which, like most other Orientals, he appears to be passionately

addicted. In fact, his active, restless temper, will never suffer him to be unoccupied; and, when not engaged with graver and more important affairs, he descends even to riddling. Nothing is too minute for him. For example, a young Egyptian Turk, educated in the school of law, now professor of the mathematics, and teacher of the junior officers at Alexandria, is compelled every week to give him an exact account of the manner in which each of his pupils pursues his studies.

During the period in which he was pushing forward the preparations necessary for putting his fleet to sea, a much smaller portion of the day than usual was devoted to his audience and ordinary business. Indeed, he would often give audiences in the arsenal, where he spent a considerable part of his time; after which he used to step into his elegant little state-barge, and cause himself to be rowed out into the harbour among his ships, to observe the progress of the naval architects and shipwrights, and urge them forward by his presence; and in these little excursions of business he was sometimes so deeply interested that he would not return to the palace before twelve o'clock, thus greatly abridging his hours of relaxation. The accidents of the weather never interfered with his resolutions: he will sometimes set out on a journey in the midst of a heavy shower of rain or a storm, which has more than once caused him very serious illness. His movements are sudden and unexpected; he appears in Cairo or Alexandria when least looked for, which maintains a certain degree of vigilance among the agents of government; though something of all this may, perhaps, be set down to caprice or affectation. In the gardens of Shoubra there is a small alcove, where the Pasha, during his brief visits to that palace, will frequently sit, about eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and, dismissing from about him all his courtiers and attendants, remain for an hour or so. From this alcove two long vistas, between cypress, orange, and citron trees, diverge and extend the whole length of the grounds; and in the calm bright nights of the East, by moon or starlight, when the air is perfumed by the faint odours of the most delicate flowers, a more delicious or romantic station could hardly be found. In the affairs of the heart, Mohammed Ali is not altogether without delicacy: during the whole life-time of his wife, an energetic and superior woman, he invariably treated her with the most profound respect, and she always retained a great influence over him. Even since her death, he has never married another woman, though he has not refrained from keeping a number of female slaves in his harem. She lies buried beside her son Toussoun, in a sumptuous tomb near Cairo; and, when I visited the place, some friendly hand had recently been strewing sweet flowers over their graves.

Latterly, it is said, the Pasha has greatly reduced his female establishment; and the mode in which he effected this reduction is highly characteristic. He ordered all the unmarried officers of his court and army, who were of sufficient merit and rank, to assemble at an appointed hour in the garden of one of his palaces. They were advised of his gracious intentions, and properly arranged for the mode of procedure which had been chosen as most favourable to a judicious selection of husbands for the fair brides. The old lady who had the care of the harem, from a position where she was

concealed from view, examined the physiognomy and port of each of the assembled bachelors, and, without further ceremony, wrote down the name of the lady whom she thought best suited to a man of such developments. The assembly was then dismissed; and each man, on going to his house, received his bride. This honour was not without its disadvantages, since, if it should unaccountably happen that a man was not exactly suited in his new wife, he was deprived of the distinguishing privilege of other Mussulmans. He had taken her for better or for worse, as no prudent courtier would incur the displeasure of the Pasha by divorcing a wife received under such circumstances. The Pasha has now only three elderly slaves, who have little influence over him.*

The Duke of Ragusa has attempted an appreciation of the political character of Mohammed Ali, with partial success. He has described ably all his better qualities, and estimated at their full value whatever reforms or improvements he has effected in the countries under his rule. But he has omitted to complete the picture by describing the mischief effected by the Pasha, and the numerous lamentable failures which have attended his principal enterprises. I have enjoyed more extensive opportunities than the Duke of observing the working of the modern Egyptian system, and can therefore venture to speak of it with greater confidence. Every part of the country supplied unequivocal proofs that his Highness understood but ill the art of civil government. Under the Mamlooks, a superabundance of prosperity will not be supposed to have existed, for their Beys were tyrants, eager to live in splendour and luxury at the expense of the industrious classes. Nevertheless, ignorant and oppressive as they were, their sway still left the peasant numerous material comforts, with means of cultivating his land, which we should now look for in vain in the whole Valley of the Nile. Since the accession of Mohammed Ali, innumerable villages have been deserted, most of the towns and cities have shrunk in their dimensions, the clothes of the people have been exchanged for rags, their food has been deteriorated by many degrees, whole districts have been thrown out of cultivation, and are fast becoming a prey to the sands of the desert, and the population has dwindled from three millions to one million and a half, according to the estimate of Sir Gardner Wilkinson, which may, however, be somewhat too low. In Syria, while it continued in the hands of the Pasha, the same process rapidly went on. This fact, which it is impossible to deny, appears to be a very important set-off against the Pasha's successful achievements, whatever they may be. It is much easier to build ships, and construct arsenals, and excavate canals, than to promote the happiness of the people, which all will confess Mohammed Ali to be incapable of doing, who reflect that his government has cost Egypt half as many lives as, by all the wars of Napoleon, were destroyed in Europe. To speak the truth frankly, Mohammed Ali is an ignorant politician, easily duped by adventurers of all kinds; and ever since his arrival at power in Egypt, he has been incessantly encircled by a cloud of the locusts collected from all parts of Europe, but chiefly from France, where the animal abounds in greatest plenty. These, for their own advantage, have urged him into

* Dr. Olin.

an extravagant expenditure, and the most wanton waste of human life, to secure themselves employment, and gratify their unworthy passions of every

Mohammed Ali.

kind. Again, in diplomacy the Pasha has always been the tool of his worst enemy, the court of the Tuileries, which, while using its utmost exertions to bring about a rupture between him and Great Britain, has been secretly undermining his authority in Egypt, and taking every practicable means to precipitate his downfall.

CHAPTER VI.

JOURNEY TO ROSETTA.—EGYPTIAN LAKES.—BATTLE OF THE NILE.

THOUGH I am far from adopting the notion of Volney, that Alexandria belongs not properly to Egypt, because it seems not naturally and originally to have been visited by the waters of the Nile, I admit that there exists the greatest possible contrast between its barren environs and the noble land which the Nile's deposits have created. Over this land, stand-

ing now upon the verge of it, and about to enter, it may be useful to cast a cursory glance. Egypt consists properly of a single valley, upon an average about eight miles in breadth, extending for five hundred miles from Essouan, under the tropic of Cancer, to Cairo, a little below which the country branches out on both sides, and assumes the figure of an equilateral triangle, the base of which rests against the sea. Through the whole length of this valley, the Nile, entering between piles of basaltic rocks from Nubia, flows in a majestic stream, diffusing fertility and abundance on all sides, and branching off here and there into canals, which in one case have called into existence a rich and beautiful province in the heart of the desert. Arriving at the apex of the triangle above mentioned, its waters divide and flow north-east and north-west along the limits of the cultivable land, discharging themselves into the Mediterranean near Damietta and Rosetta. Anciently the Nile had seven mouths, which were adorned by so many cities; and even at the present day the river communicates by various minor channels with the sea. The Delta is interveined throughout its whole extent by canals, which maintain, as it were by circulation, the principle of vitality.

From this very brief sketch it will be seen that Egypt is a country of extraordinary character. But, in order to convey a complete idea of its aspect, it must be added, that through eight degrees of latitude two lofty chains of barren mountains, running parallel with the Nile, wall the country in, as it were, from the Libyan desert on the one hand, and from the desert of Arabia on the other. Here and there gaps in these chains open up a communication with the wilderness, and admit from time to time torrents of sand which, tumultuously driven in by the hurricane, bury the fertile soil for miles: these defy the labours of the husbandman. But the same wind which brings, by degrees disperses them; and the Nile, by its benignant inundation, in time obliterates all traces of their inroad. From one end to the other of the valley, and over the spacious plains of the Delta, cities, towns, and villages are more or less thickly interspersed, their vicinity being always marked to the eye by groves of palm-trees towering above the loftiest buildings, and shading in many places undulating mounds of rubbish, the growth of centuries, which daily rise higher and higher round the habitation of man in Egypt. These the traveller, at first sight, invariably pronounces a nuisance and a deformity. But during the period of the inundation, when, by the rising of the river, Egypt is converted into a sea, these mounds constitute the protection of the people, and are beheld rising above the surface of the water, like the hilly shores of so many small islets. At this season Egypt assumes a character of beauty altogether its own; for though the Ganges and the Indus overflow their banks, and present frequently a much vaster surface of water to the eye, they want those rocky barriers on either hand, which here confine the flood, and are reflected in all their grandeur from its surface. Nor does the beauty of these arid ridges consist in their height and precipitous cliffs only. Flooded morning and evening by the oblique rays of the sun, they present an infinite variety of brilliant colours to the eye, assuming at every instant, as the luminary rises or descends, fresh hues which, blending differently,

produce the most gorgeous effect in the world. And on this spectacle how delightful it is to gaze in the freshness of the dawn, or toward the close of evening! Overhead an amethystine sky; in the distance, on all sides, towering forests of palm-trees, mingling with mosques, domes, and minarets, and the broad and majestic Nile at your feet, converted into a golden expanse by the illusions of light! The atmosphere, too, impregnated with delicious perfume, lends its influence to complete the intoxication, while the notes of music, rude but joyous, burst from each village as your boat sails by; for even despotism itself cannot wholly repress the Arab's buoyant spirits.

Towards sights and enjoyments such as these I felt that I was hastening, while engaged in preparation to quit Alexandria. I had left Europe alone; but, during my short stay in the above city, formed numerous acquaintances, some of whom were to accompany me to Cairo, while others resolved to afford us the pleasure of their society, for some hours at least, on our way thither. We had the choice of three routes,—one across the Desert, usually performed on camels; the other by the Mahmoodiyah canal and the Nile; and the third through Rosetta and the Delta. I preferred the last, as being incomparably the most interesting. Our beasts were donkeys, the owners of which sent a number of lads to attend us and bring back the animals from the capital.

Arab Musicians

About one o'clock in the afternoon we quitted Alexandria by the Canopic gate, our road at first lying between high mounds of sand and ruins, which, as we advanced, became smaller and fewer, and at length wholly disappeared. We then entered upon the Desert, and for a time lost sight of every trace of vegetation, although, in the course of the afternoon, we saw a few small clusters of date palms, with two or three poor Bedouin tents, whose owners were absent with their flocks. Near one of these little groves we observed a Mohammedan cenotaph or head-stone, consisting of a low slender pillar of white marble, surmounted by a neatly-sculptured turban, beneath which, in very legible characters, was a long inscription. In the sandy waste, close to this spot, where our friends took their leave of us, I for the first time beheld the phenomenon of the mirage, or "false water of the Desert."

About a league in advance there *appears* to be a large sheet of water, interspersed with rocks and cattle immersed to their knees; their images are

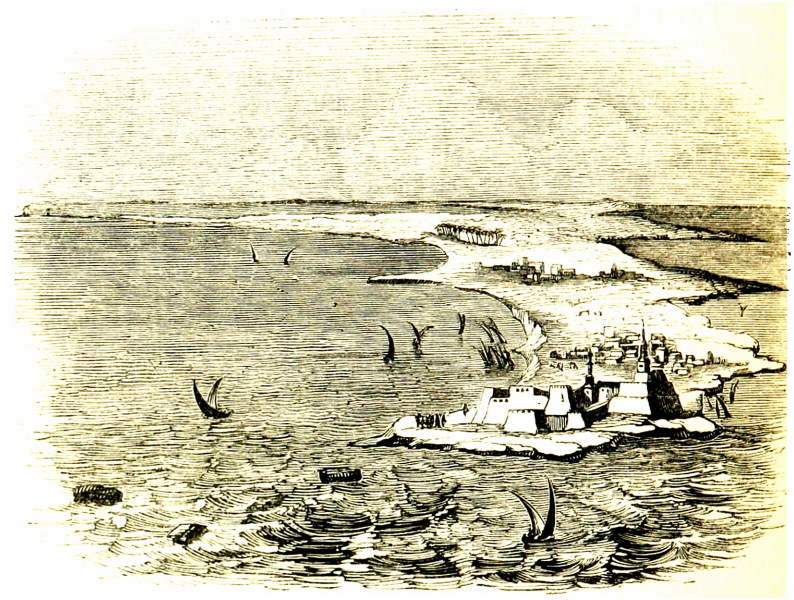
seen reflected, though the surface of the mirror is disturbed by a flickering haziness; oppressed with heat and sand, you hasten onwards, the water still receding as you advance; surely one of the plagues of Tantalus was invented on this spot; an *ignis fatuus* is not half so provoking as this "mirage," again and again continuing, though the last deception left you determined not to be deceived again. Thus, even the Desert is productive of interest; an infinity of sand is in itself a novelty,—not a pleasing one; yet to know that it is sand, and at the same time only not believe that it is water, equals any deception in the legerdemain of nature. Swallows in great numbers skim over the plain—are they also deceived? The plumage of their breasts is of a deep red colour: I leave it to naturalists to determine whether it is the same bird that comes with summer, when summer does come to England, and if in changing country it changes plumage.*

Pursuing our way through the waste, in which the drifted sand was in some places blown up into heaps; in others spread out into vast beds, where our animals often sank a foot deep, and in others, again, covered with water and reduced to soft mud, we a little before nightfall arrived opposite the ruins, or rather site, of Canopus. The remains of this desolate city, erected gradually, according to tradition, around the rude tomb of the pilot of Menelaus, have long been covered by the waves, which, in this part of the coast, must be gaining on the land, against which they are driven with great and continual violence by the north wind. We now approached some Bedouins; they live in low ragged tents; a wooden bowl, a coffee-pot, a mat to sleep on, a gourd rind for water, a donkey, and a goat for milk, comprise their domestic utensils; they pack up and pack off at a moment's notice, as our gipsies. I requested a draught of water, which was brought to me in *the* bowl, enough for man and donkey; the bearer of it, a fine young woman, wore a pair of large ear-rings; it seemed as if she had sold her wardrobe to purchase these barbarous ornaments; she was, otherwise, beauty unadorned, except being tattooed, not only as to her eyes and chin, but very low down. A man was employed in making cloth—I hope for the young woman. The Bedouins in general live beyond the reach of despotism, and differ much from those who dwell in the cultivated parts of the country. We had passed the spot where Abercrombie fell, and were now within sight of Aboukir. Denon, speaking of the battle of the Nile, boasts that two or three vessels escaped from Nelson, having cut and run in a fog—"*fallere et effugere est triumphus.*" †

Through the inner extremity of the bay the sea was turned by the English into Lake Mareotis, where it is said a number of villages, with their fields and gardens, were overwhelmed beneath the water, which is now again excluded by a wall, or stone embankment, erected by the Pasha. Latterly, however, the old works were found insufficient to resist the fury of the waves, and workmen were now employed in erecting a new line of wall immediately within the old one. The wind, blowing from the north, was very high, and the sea came roaring and dashing in a tremendous manner on the shore, frequently breaking over the old wall, along the top of

* Sir Frederick Henniker. † Idem.

which the road now lay. For several miles our course continued close to the southern extremity of Aboukir Bay, where the aspect of the Desert, viewed



Aboukir Bay.

in the dull twilight of a cold cloudy day, was dreary and desolate beyond expression. This was in fact the moment for feeling the full influence of the waste, not a sound being anywhere heard but the howling of the wind and the dashing of the surge, mingled at intervals with the melancholy scream of the heron or stork. We had ourselves ceased to speak, every one seeming to be absorbed in his own thoughts; and these, if I might judge by the complexion of my own, were as gloomy and comfortless as the landscape. Myriads of enormous crabs, issuing from the holes in which they had lain concealed during the day, traversed our route, grievously terrifying the donkeys, which appeared not hitherto to have cultivated the slightest acquaintance with this description of beast.*

It had been already dark for some time when we reached that broad deep channel, formerly perhaps the mouth of the Canopic branch of the Nile, by which the sea flows into Lake Edko; and, owing to the lateness of the hour, and the boisterousness of the weather, there at first appeared to be but little likelihood, even if the wind would allow us to make ourselves heard, that the Arab ferrymen would risk their boats in such a night. We shouted with all our might, but no answering voice from the opposite shore gave us the assurance of being heard, and we in vain looked across the dusky waves in search of a boat; the wind blew more and more fiercely,

* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

the cold grew bitterer, and something between rain and dew began to fall. To bivouac unsheltered on the open plain, or to return to the village of Aboukir, appeared to be our only alternative; but at length some one advised the firing off of a pistol, and this means succeeded; for presently afterwards we had the satisfaction of hearing a shout from the water, and in a short time beheld the ferry-boat approaching. The embarking scene which now took place was not a little ludicrous. Our luggage, beds, &c., were, of course, easily put on board; but when it came to the asses, they seemed to have some secret objection to this mode of conveyance, and exhibited so striking a degree of that firmness of purpose for which their race has long been renowned, that it appeared altogether doubtful whether they could be prevailed upon to go over or not. However, the vociferation of the Arabs, and the blows which were most unsparingly dealt upon their cruppers, at length convinced them that they were likely to get the worst of the argument; so that they yielded up the point; and, the long dispute over, we were carried on board on the backs of the Arabs, and the boat put off. It was by this time so dark that we could scarcely distinguish one another, and the crazy old *baris* rolled and pitched in an extraordinary manner. At length, however, we reached the opposite shore, a bare unsheltered beach, where we found a solitary stone hut, half in ruins, round which all the winds of heaven seemed to be blowing. On entering this wretched tenement, which, in European maps, is dignified with the appellation of a caravanserai, we found a Turk established in the least uncomfortable corner, where he had spread his carpet, and was smoking his pipe, by the light of a small dim lamp, burning beside him on a window-seat. It was one of those wild-looking places which writers of romance delight in describing. Situated on the bleak sea-beach, almost within reach of the spray, slightly built at first, and now fast crumbling to ruins, with shattered doors, a few rough boards for windows, long fowling-pieces, pistols, sabres, &c., suspended against the wall, and one solitary man, smoking and musing in the partial gloom—it formed a savage picture, which, under other circumstances, I should have contemplated with pleasure.

The Turk saluted us civilly as we entered, and in the hope, perhaps, of a small consideration, yielded us up his place, undertaking to assist our Arabs in preparing tea and coffee. While this operation was going forward, we spread our beds upon the floor, and put everything in readiness for passing the night. As it blew almost a hurricane, the wind entered in strong gusts through the numerous apertures in the wall, and swept so violently round the room, that it was with much difficulty that either candle or lamp could be kept burning; but having despatched our simple meal, we bade defiance to the winds, and, retiring to bed, every one of the party, except myself, was almost immediately asleep. From various causes I found it quite impossible to follow their example: fleas, bugs, and other vermin, enumerated among the plagues of Egypt, soon found their way into my bed, and began to initiate me into the mysteries of travelling: the strong tea and coffee which we had taken, co-operating with the excitement created by our extremely novel situation, had also their share in producing wakefulness; and there I lay—

"Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy;"

listening to the roaring of the sea and the storm, and ardently wishing for the dawn. About midnight, when the Turk and the muleteers, after much loud talking, had fallen asleep, a party of Bedouins arrived, demanding, with vociferous shouts, to be admitted out of the rain, which was now falling in torrents. Not being immediately attended to, they beat the old door with their lances, and were, I believe, upon the point of sending it in to the middle of the floor, when the Arab awaked and admitted them. The dying embers of the fire were now kindled once more into a blaze, and the new-comers, crowding round it to dry themselves, contrived by their noisy conversation to keep me still longer awake; but they again departed before day-break, and left us to our repose.

Sir Frederick Henniker found somewhere near this spot a still inferior tenement, where he passed a night of discomfort, which he describes with as much zest as if he had enjoyed it. "The half-way house is a wooden hut, nearly filled with a wooden dresser; stretched my mattress and myself upon it. A dirty fellow was baling out coffee all night; a gin-shop cannot be more disagreeable; the boards of the roof had parted company, and the stars and myself were winking at one another till morning."

When we arose in the morning, the rain, which had fallen heavily during the night, had ceased, though the wind still continued very high. We breakfasted hastily and set out. The portion of the Desert upon which we now entered seemed still more wild and desolate than that traversed on the preceding evening. Our route still lay close along the edge of the sea, where alone the sand was hard enough to support the weight of our beasts, which frequently moved through the waves, from whose crests the wind snatched away the foam, and wafted it over the Desert, while our garments were almost drenched by the spray. A few miles beyond the caravanserai we saw a part of the hull of an English ship, recently cast on shore and wrecked there; the planks had been nearly all stripped off, and the waves were now running like sluices through the ribs. Various parties of Arabs, some on foot, others mounted, like ourselves, on asses, passed us on their way to Alexandria. Our attendants, consisting of two men and three lads, were exceedingly cheerful and merry, laughing and singing snatches of Arab songs all the way. From time to time we discovered the date groves of Edko, and about ten o'clock the lofty minarets and palm-trees of Rosetta became visible; shortly after which a black pillar, about eight or ten feet in height, informed us that we were to strike off from the shore; and similar columns, erected at regular distances, marked the track across the Desert, the city itself being discernible at a distance only in very clear days.

Before finally quitting the shore, it may perhaps be useful to take a rapid view of the extraordinary series of lakes which stretches along it from beyond the Arab's Tower in the west, almost to the environs of El-Arish eastward, a distance of nearly two hundred miles. Many of the lakes communicate by narrow openings with the sea. When this is not the case, a belt of sand-hills, narrowing sometimes to a mere causeway, and descending in level almost to that of the water, separates the lakes from the Mediterranean. The most westerly, that of Mareotis, was, previous to the French expedition, almost entirely dried up, only a very small portion of water

remaining in the lower part of the hollow. All the rest of the broad area was cultivated and studded with villages. In order to distress the French who occupied Alexandria, the English broke down the dikes towards the east, and let into this vast basin the waters of the sea, which took sixty-three days to fill it. Forty-four villages, with the lands on which the inhabitants subsisted, were thus deluged. But the loss sustained in territory was amply, perhaps, compensated for by the increased salubrity of the atmosphere of Alexandria. By the works of Mohammed Ali the sea has been again excluded, so that the existence of the lake depends on the rain and the overflowings of the canal. In summer, consequently, it subsides greatly; but so completely saline do its waters continue, that the lands uncovered as it retires, are clothed with a thick crust of salt. It is the intention of Mohammed Ali to drain it entirely, and restore its area to cultivation.

Lake Maádiah, divided from the former by the narrow neck of land over which the canal has been carried, is of much inferior extent; it is likewise salt, and supposed to be of recent formation. The line of works by which it is separated from Aboukir Bay I have described above. The next basin, proceeding eastward, is that of Lake Edko, partly surrounded by groves of palm-trees, which nearly conceal the tombs, mosques, and minarets of the village. Lake Bourlos in the Delta, the largest, perhaps, of the Egyptian lakes after that of Menzaleh, communicates with the Mediterranean by one mouth. The channels by which the sea enters Lake Menzaleh are supposed to represent the Mendisian and Tanitic mouths of the Nile. Its waters abound with fish, and its banks are celebrated for the number of wild birds there caught. The most remarkable is the flamingo, from whose tongue is exfracted a species of oil, though they are not now eaten, as in the time of the Romans, who esteemed them great delicacies. Under the emperors, Egypt paid a great part of its tribute in flamingos' tongues. The water of Lake Menzaleh is less salt and disagreeable than that of the sea. The rice planted on its borders enjoys a great reputation, attributable, no doubt, to the quality of the soil impregnated with salt, which everywhere covers the surface with a white incrustation.*

Farther to the east we have the Birket-el-Balah or Date Lake, and the Sebaka Bardual or

> "Sirbonian bog,
> Where armies whole have sunk."

Modern experience has verified the account given of this singular tract by the ancients. The descriptions of Strabo and Diodorus Siculus are still applicable to its present state. Diodorus tells us that entire armies have perished through ignorance of this marsh, which the wind sometimes covers with sand that conceals its dangers. "This does not," he adds, "give way immediately beneath the feet, but sinks by degrees, as if to betray travellers, who continue to advance, until, discovering their error, they endeavour in vain to assist one another, their efforts contributing only to their destruction. Their struggles only plunge them deeper and deeper until they are finally overwhelmed. For this reason the name of Barathron was given to this marshy plain." †

* Cadalvène et Breuvery, t. i., p. 42.

† Clot Bey.

I now resume the journey to Rosetta. It has been observed above, that a line of high columns marks the route across the Desert, from the sea to the environs of the city, in traversing which we arrived at a well, furnished, for the use of travellers, with a small metal basin. Our attendants, desirous of keeping all the water for themselves, pretended it was dry, and would have persuaded us not to alight; but, being thirsty, we thought it best to examine for ourselves, and found that the well contained much more than the whole company needed.

The approach to Rosetta from the Desert is singularly striking and agreeable. The imagination, which for many hours has been dwelling, though not without pleasure, upon ideas of barrenness, aridity, desolation, feels suddenly an influx of delightful images, arising partly from contrast, partly from the view of luxuriant verdure, exhibiting, in spite of winter, all the glossy freshness of spring. Though the first date-palms at which we arrived stood in the midst of dry shifting sand, where it is wonderful that they should find any moisture, they were loaded with noble clusters of ripe fruit, which our donkey-boys thinned, as they went along, with stones and brickbats. It appears to be generally believed that these trees naturally spring up with tall columnar trunks, bare of branches to the summit; but, in fact, this nakedness is the work of man, for the young palm of two or three years' growth is covered with branches from the earth upwards, like a huge

Mosque near Rosetta.

flag or water-lily; and a plantation of them in the improved state is peculiarly verdant and beautiful. Were the sap, however, allowed to distribute itself through these superfluous branches, the tree would never acquire that towering height which it now reaches, nor would the fruit attain the size or flavour it possesses in its cultivated state; and for this reason the lower branches are annually lopped off, both in the date and doum trees.

Many men, however, of many minds. The date-palm, which to me always appeared so magnificent, has been found to suggest extremely

different ideas to others. A palm, observes Sir Frederick Henniker, is elegant as to its leaves; but the trunk is a long and bare straight line, like Lady Lath-and-Plaster at a drawing-room, or a corpse carrying its own plume of feathers.

The city of Rosetta, properly *Rashid*, built by a grandson of Haroun-al-Rashid, and situated about four miles from the sea, is surrounded by low walls, and at a short distance wears the appearance of a European town; but this resemblance vanishes when you enter, though its long streets, lofty red brick houses, with projecting latticed windows, numerous mosques, and large open spaces like squares, impart to it an original and important air, far superior to the Turkish portion of Alexandria. Many of the houses, like those of Lahore, are five stories high, and have several tiers of projecting windows, in the form of small Gothic turrets, with curious open work. They are higher than those in Alexandria, with the convenience that, in the upper stories, you may shake hands across the streets. The mosques, though all, I believe, built of brick, are spacious and lofty, and adorned with tall slender minarets, surrounded by three or four narrow galleries, placed, the one above the other, at various heights. From the size of the place, it must formerly, I imagine, have contained at least 30,000 inhabitants, which have now dwindled down to about half that number; its decline being justly attributed to the formation of the Mahmoodiyah, which has almost wholly turned into another channel the trade between Cairo and Alexandria, and is daily enriching Fouah at the expense of Rosetta.

Our party, which was somewhat numerous, put up at an inn kept by an Italian. The accommodations found here were none of the most magnificent; but there being no other in the place, we were reduced to Hobson's choice. Having deposited our baggage in the sleeping apartment allotted to us, a huge *chambre de ménage*, common to all travellers of all grades, the beds being ranged round the apartment as in an hospital, we strolled forth to examine the city and its environs. To me the object of greatest curiosity was of course the Nile, consecrated by the associations of four thousand years, which roll as it were through the pages of sacred and profane history, allying itself with the most extraordinary events, and borrowing additional interest from a thousand creations of Oriental fiction. It was to me almost a fabulous river; and now that I approached so near its banks, I began to apprehend I should experience considerable disappointment. But when emerging from a narrow and crowded street I stood suddenly upon the quay, and beheld its magnificent expanse stretching eastward, with all the beauties of the Delta beyond it, I felt that, in this instance at least, the reality exceeded expectation. This, then, was the Nile! The river celebrated by Herodotus, and a long line of historians after him! On the banks of this stream the lawgiver of the Israelites had lain in a cradle of bulrushes. From its waters the Saviour of mankind had quenched his thirst. I gazed up and down, to the north and to the south; the sun, though slightly declined from the zenith, was shining brilliantly; clear and blue stretched the atmosphere above; innumerable groves of palm-trees, rising behind each other, appeared to unite and form one vast forest, stretching over the plains of the Delta to the verge of the horizon, leaving, however, the

green and sunny glades for the eye to rest upon between; on the river were many sail gliding lazily before the breeze, while the sounds of a new language filled my ears: all these circumstances united, rendered the moment in which I first caught sight of the Nile one of the most pleasureable of my life.

Volney, whose imagination appears to have been sick during his stay in Egypt, though he does justice to the environs of Rosetta, disparages the Nile by comparing it with the Seine between Auteuil and Passy; exactly as Tavernier discovers the Ganges to be very much like the same river opposite the Louvre. Between the city of Rosetta and the river there is a spacious quay, where all those boats which drop so far down the stream land their cargoes. Here, likewise, the inhabitants enjoy the air in the cool of the evening; for, if the Orientals do not walk so much as Europeans, they are no less fond of promenades, where they can lounge at their ease, and build castles in the air. A Turk of consequence was here performing his ablutions as we passed, near the river's edge, in public; one slave poured water over his foot as he held it up, another wiped it, and in the same manner with his hand: ablution, as the purification from all uncleanliness, is commanded to be performed five times a day, and extra, after every dirty act, such as touching a dog or a Christian, (dogs and Christians are often called by the same name, Kelb); thus often is a Mohammedan baptised. A Turk does not wear either gloves or stockings, nor even his walking-shoes in a house, lest they might be considered a screen of dirt; cleanliness is next to godliness.*

Head of a Greek, Rosetta.

Continuing our ramble along the banks of the stream, we soon reached the celebrated gardens, which lie chiefly to the south of the city, on the way to the convent of Abou-Mandoor. They are not, however, gardens in the European sense of the word, but large walled plantations of henna, pomegranate, banana, lemon, citron, and orange-trees, intermingled irregularly; luxuriant, unpruned, a verdant wilderness of every variety of tint, with fruit, glowing like spheres of gold, clustering thick among the leaves, weighing down the boughs, and tempting the hand at every turn. Here and there, among this almost matted undergrowth, a palm-tree towers aloft, and waves in the wind its graceful feathery branches, while near it the Egyptian sycamore, or Pharaoh's fig-tree, the growth of a thousand years, stretches forth its vast tortuous boughs, affording, even when the sun is hottest, a grateful refreshing shade. Were

* Sir Frederick Henniker.

these inclosures a little larger, and their woods of lovely fruit-trees separated from each other by open spaces of greensward, they might without impropriety be compared with those paradises of the Persian kings, described by Xenophon; and with this advantage on their side, that no Persian garden ever beheld so majestic a river as that which flows beneath their walls.

The gardens of Rosetta afford the Arab an agreeable shelter from the intense heat; and here he frequently takes his evening meal of pilau (boiled rice and fowls), doubly grateful from the abstinence of the day, and the refreshing shade. The grounds are watered by the Persian wheel, from wells filled by the Nile during the inundation. The small wheels are turned round by asses, the larger by buffaloes. The gardens of Rosetta derive much of their celebrity from the sudden contrast witnessed by the traveller in exchanging the barren wastes in the circuit of Alexandria, for a tract of country round Rosetta, and in the Delta, abounding in trees and the most luxuriant vegetation.*

From the gardens we proceeded along the Nile to the convent of Abou-Mandoor, situated on a sharp and somewhat elevated promontory projecting into the river. This convent, erected in honour of a saint of the same name, which in Arabic signifies the Father of Brightness,† is inhabited by certain dervishes, intrusted with the care of keeping in order a superb fountain, the pious foundation of a Mussulman. Fruits of a religious spirit, these institutions of public utility, so common in the East, are nearly all due to private individuals. ‡

Turning a little to the right, we ascended to an old tower standing on the summit of the highest eminence in the neighbourhood, where Mohammed Ali has lately erected a telegraph. The low hills, which here border the stream on the west, appear to have been formed by the sands of the desert, and are in many places sprinkled with a few hardy plants, coarse and prickly, but which occasionally serve as pasture for the ass and the camel. The Arab intrusted with the working of the telegraph willingly permitted us to ascend the tower. The weather, though cold, was clear, and the view which presented itself interesting and varied in a very high degree. To the south and west was the desert; to the north the sea; beneath our feet, towards the east, the Nile, with numerous sail moving to and fro upon its broad surface; and beyond the level bright open rice fields, the diminutive lakes and canals, the picturesque villages, and vast forests of the Delta. To all these elements of a charming landscape must be added the transparence of an African atmosphere, the brightness of the sunshine, and, still more, the glory and splendour which prodigious ancient renown has cast over that singular land.

It was from the summit of this tower that the traveller Denon, in constant apprehension of being captured by the Arabs, witnessed the first movements of the British and French fleets in the famous battle of the Nile. His description is so rapid and lively, and so vividly realises the feelings which a spectator so circumstanced must have experienced, that I am tempted to translate it here.

"On the 14th Fructidor, chance had led us to Abou-Mandour, which is the termination of a pretty walk from Rosetta along the banks of the

* Dr. Hume. † Clot Bey. ‡ Cadalvène et De Breuvery.

stream. Having ascended the tower which commands the monastery, we perceived twenty sail approaching the Bay of Aboukir: to near it, to form in order of battle, and begin the attack, was the affair of a moment. The first cannon was heard at five o'clock; and the smoke soon concealed from us the movements of the two armaments; but when night came on, we were able to distinguish a little better what was doing, though without being able to form any very clear conception. The danger we ran of being surprised by the smallest party of Bedouins could not turn away our attention from an event to us of such vast moment. The rolling and redoubled fire was perpetual; we could not doubt that the combat was terrible, and maintained on both sides with equal obstinacy. On returning to Rosetta we got upon the tops of our houses; towards ten o'clock a great light announced a conflagration; a few minutes after, a frightful explosion was followed by a profound silence; we had indistinctly seen ships of war on either side of the burning object, firing upon it, and we guessed that our countrymen it was who had set it on fire. The silence which succeeded seemed to indicate the retreat of the English, who alone could continue or cease the combat, since their motions alone were not confined and restricted. At eleven o'clock a slow firing recommenced; by midnight the battle raged as fiercely as ever, but by two in the morning it once more ceased. By the break of day I was at the advanced posts; and, ten minutes after, the cannonade recommenced; at nine, another vessel blew up; at ten, four ships, the only ones that remained entire, traversed under all sail the field of battle, of which they seemed to be masters, since they were neither attacked nor followed. Such was the phantom conjured up by the enthusiasm of hope!

"I spent most of my time at the tower of Abou-Mandoor; I counted twenty-five ships, of which one-half were mere wrecks, whilst the rest were so disabled as to be unable to manœuvre in order to rescue them: for three days we remained in this painful state of uncertainty. With my telescope in hand I had sketched the disasters I had seen, in order to learn if the morrow brought forth any change. We refused to believe in the evidence of our senses; but the boghaz closed, and all communication with Alexandria cut off, soon taught us that our fortunes were changed; that, separated from our mother-country, we had become almost compelled to exist on our own means until the closing of the war: we learned, in fine, that the English fleet had doubled our line, which was not sufficiently well sheltered by the island against which it rested; that the enemy, taking with a double line our vessels, one after the other, had rendered, by this manœuvre, one half of our force the spectators of the destruction of the rest; that it was the Orient that blew up at ten o'clock; that L'Hercule sprang the next morning, and that the vessels Guillaume Tell, Généreux, Diane, and Justice, had taken advantage of the enemy's weariness to escape from its united strength. We learned, in fact, that the 14th Fructidor had deprived us of one half of our strength; and that the destruction of our fleet had restored to our enemies the empire of the Mediterranean, which the unexampled exploits of our armies had snatched from them, and which the preservation of our ships would have enabled us to retain."*

* Voyage, pp. 35, 36.

Returning to the city, we visited the deserted rice-mills of the Pasha, where large sums of money have been squandered upon steam-engines, and a complicated apparatus for cleansing the rice from the husk, which have all proved utterly useless; as, instead of effecting the intended purpose, they only crush and spoil the grain. A large factory, likewise, erected at great expense, has been for some time abandoned, and is fast going to ruin. The great tannery we found in operation, under the direction of three or four Europeans, who employ in the works about three hundred Arabs. The *shoonah*, or warehouse, of the Pasha, where prodigious quantities of red and yellow rice were piled up in heaps, employs a great number of hands. Nearly all the rice in the kingdom is collected here, and it all belongs to one man, the Pasha himself. This merchant-viceroy monopolises the whole, and at his own price, *vi et armis:* when the grain is nearly ripe, soldiers are placed in the fields as guards, lest the Pasha should be defrauded, and lest he who sows should reap: "proprio condidit horreo, quicquid de Libycis verritur acervis."*

Here, in 1829, the most fearful scenes are said to have taken place, when there was a famine in Egypt, an artificial famine, created by the Pasha's monopoly of grain; when the people, collecting in crowds around the public stores, beheld, through the palisades of this same shoonah, huge piles of corn spoiling in the open air, while they were perishing of hunger. It has been asserted, but I trust incorrectly, that government refused to sell the grain to the people, until it was spoiled, and that it would not even permit them to purchase better elsewhere. This famine was equally felt throughout the country. At Cairo the government first sold a kind of mixture, half wheat and half barley; but for the wheat mouldy beans were afterwards substituted; and this continued for about three or four months, during which corn was contraband throughout Egypt. Some wheat was even imported, by private speculators, from Syria; a thing unheard of since the famine of Ismain Bey; but a heavy duty put a stop to this promised relief. †

It may not be improper to make, in this place, a few remarks on the subject of famines in Egypt, occasioned generally by the inadequate rise of the Nile. We find one great dearth described in Genesis; ancient historians, also, relate many remarkable examples of scarcity, in which, through the deficiency of proper nourishment, the inhabitants fed upon human flesh, though they spared the sacred animals. Several terrible famines are recorded by Jemaleddin, in his History of Modern Egypt:—In the reign of Almostanser Billah, who succeeded his father Aldhader in A.H. 427, occurred a dearth greater than had been known in the memory of man. A small measure of wheat sold for two golden dinars (nearly 1*l.* sterling), and in a short time the price was again doubled. This, however, was but the beginning of their calamities; for all the usual articles of food at length failing, they openly devoured dogs and human flesh. The dogs which survived, rendered furious by hunger, broke into the houses, and tore to pieces the children in the sight of their parents, who were too weak

* Sir Frederick Henniker.

† Deux Mots sur l'Egypte.

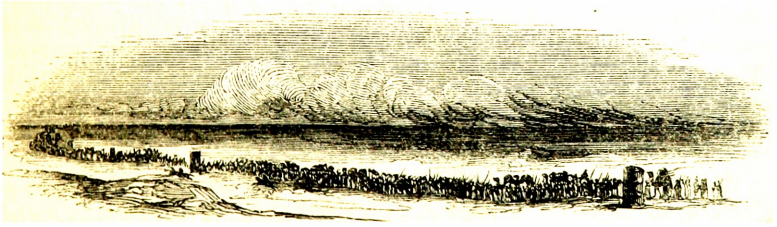
to defend them. In the street Altabek, the most elegant in Cairo, twenty houses, the meanest valued at a thousand dinars, were sold for a small quantity of bread. The same calamity occurred thrice in two years. It is related by Ben Aljouzi, that a lady of great opulence and distinction, taking four measures of jewels in her hands, went forth into the streets, exclaiming, "Who will give me corn for these gems?" No person attending to her cries, she thus spake :—"Since ye cannot aid me in my distress, what need have I of you?" and with these words she cast them into the street, where they were suffered to remain, no person regarding them. Almostanser exhausted the public treasures in alleviating the miseries of his people; and these not sufficing, he disposed of his personal ornaments and possessions, and the riches of his palace, amounting, it is said, to thirty thousand gems of all kinds, seventy-five thousand garments inwrought with gold, twenty thousand swords, together with eleven thousand villas. In this manner he was reduced to such extreme poverty, that he possessed nothing but the carpet on which he knelt to pray, and a wooden footstool. Borrowing a mule from the president of the council, he descended from the citadel to the mosque of El Azhar, where he exhorted the few survivors to patience; and shortly after this, his affairs assuming a new aspect, the whole kingdom of Egypt was restored to its wonted prosperity. A story not dissimilar to that of Aljouzi is related by Ibn Hasham. By the rushing of a sudden torrent a sepulchre was uncovered in Yemen, in which lay the body of a woman, with seven strings of pearls about her neck, on each of her hands and feet anklets and bracelets, besides seven other crural and brachial ornaments, rings set with gems of great price on every finger, and at her head a chest filled with riches, on which was this inscription :—"In thy name, O God! God Hamyar! I, the lady Di Shafar, sent my steward to Yusuf, who, delaying to return, I despatched my maid with a bushel of money for a bushel of wheat; this not succeeding, I sent a bushel of pearls; which also proving of no avail, I commanded them to be broken to pieces, and took refuge in the tomb." In the year 695 of the Hegira, another grievous famine afflicted Egypt, in which, as before, men fed on dogs and on each other's bodies. The governor of Cairo discovered three ruffians, sitting round the body of a little child, which they were eating, having seasoned itwith salt, onions, and vinegar. On being apprehended, they confessed they had long subsisted on the flesh of infants, one of which they had devoured daily. Being executed, their bodies were gibbeted at the gate Zawilet; but, during the night, they were taken down, and eaten by the famishing people. To this famine a terrible plague succeeded; and A.H. 784, another grievous famine. But, even in times of plenty, the Egyptians, as we learn from Scripture, used to feed on mallows.

It is remarked by an Arabian historian, that the numerous examples of Cannibalism which occurred in Egypt during the above famines, so accustomed the people to human flesh that the eating of it excited neither disgust nor astonishment: they grew altogether reconciled to this dreadful kind of food; they contracted at length a fondness for it throughout the country, and began to lay up a store of it for future use, without betraying any

tokens of shame or remorse; so easy is the slope to the lowest depths of wickedness.*

No doubt the sufferings of the inhabitants of Rosetta, above described, were greatly multiplied by the state of extreme poverty to which the city had been reduced by the want of trade and other causes. An air of sadness and destitution broods over the whole place. Scarcely a vestige of the merry character of the Arab is anywhere discernible; and when they endeavour to procure themselves entertainment, it is by spectacles which would sadden any other people. There is a tribe of Arabs in Egypt, who pretend that they are respected by serpents, and that no sort of snake can hurt them. As a proof of this, they have an annual procession through the streets of Rosetta, of which I was a witness; one of their number is obliged to eat a living snake in public, or so much of it as to occasion its death. Probably the snake may have been rendered harmless by some means; the people, however, suppose that for some act of piety performed by the ancestors of this tribe or family (which is by no means numerous), the Prophet protects the descendants from any injury which the snakes might occasion. The ophiophagus, who is to keep up this ridiculous farce, being, no doubt, well paid, begins to eat the living reptile; a pretty large snake is held in his hands, which writhes its folds around his naked arm as he bites at the head and body. Horror and fury are depicted in the man's countenance, and in a strong convulsive manner he puts the animal to death, by eating and swallowing part of it alive. This disgusting and horrible spectacle, however, is but seldom exhibited at present.†

The environs of Rosetta, and as much of the Delta as is visible from the eminence above the city, are described by Sir Robert Wilson as barren and unsightly. His motives for thus misrepresenting the country, it is, of course, impossible to determine with certainty. Nevertheless, he seems to have been considerably influenced by a desire to contradict the accounts of the French, many of whom are doubtless prone to exaggeration. Still, in this particular instance, I think their delineations more to be relied on than his. My experience, at least, and, consequently, my opinion, coincides with theirs.



Guide Posts in the Desert leading to Rosetta.

* Abdellatif. † Dr. Hume.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DELTA.—DAMIETTA.—ANECDOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF EGYPTIAN DESPOTISM.

I INTEND making the tour of Lower Egypt before I visit Cairo; the boatmen have persuaded me to take their skiff, which is only eighteen feet long; the waters are out, and I can cut across the country. The fashionable thing is a kanjia, or a maash, which you hire reasonably to yourself, and in your own cabin you can go from one end of Egypt to the other without seeing anything, and perform your journey, moreover, with great expedition; but I am not carrying dispatches, and so wish to see the manners of the natives. A kanjia being to a maash as a gondola is to a barge, is a decked boat, with two masts and two triangular sails, of which the foremost is much smaller than the other. There are two cabins upon deck: one about six feet in length, in which you live; the other, much shorter, for containing your provisions. Several small windows, with sliding shutters, but without glass, afford you a prospect of the river and country on both sides, and let in the cool air. Your servant sleeps in a small tent of mats before your door. The boatmen, with their captain, occupy the fore part of the kanjia, where they sit, cook their victuals and sleep. The steersman is perched aloft on your after-cabin.*

My boatman promised that he would not sit all day long cross-legged and smoking; the English vice-consul answers for his honesty, and I am persuaded. As to the honesty of this place, I have been robbed twice, and this has happened on two successive nights. Without alluding to the circumstance, I inquired the character of my hosts. The vice-consul assured me that they are of good repute. I did not mention my loss, willing rather to abide it, than cast even a suspicion on characters reputedly honest. A hook, either through the roof or through the windows, may have been the means: the window-place is open, having neither glass nor board.

The skiff is ready, a matting is put up; a mattress, a small sail, and a pair of oars, incommode the crew considerably. At taking leave of the vice-consul, coffee and pipes are presented by a *slave:* the vice-consul is not an Englishman; he is, however, supposed to be a Christian. Coffee and pipe answer to "refreshment," and are invariably brought in with a "Will you allow me to offer?" Drinking and smoking are expressed by the same word in Arabic (*eishereb*); the pipe is of wood, either cherry or jasmine; in length about six feet: length cools the smoke. Kinneir mentions one too long for the room, and always put in at the window—*mem.*, to try a fishing-rod. Presenting a cup of coffee, the slave places his hand on his forehead, his lips and his heart, signifying that he honours you in thought, word, and strength; he pledges faith to you at the same time in one of the usual forms of "double life to you," or some other set phrase. Poison is sometimes administered in coffee; there is no other cup for the

* Egypt and Mohammed Ali.

tragedy given here; but the slave does not "make essay," the cup not being so big as an egg-shell. On starting we proceeded up the Rosetta branch, which is lined with palms, sycamores, and acacias; the numberless villages are enlivened with birds unknown in England, such as the white ibis, the Egyptian crow, the black hoopoe, the Damietta duck, and the Oriental dotterel. This last bird is about the size of a crow, and is generally found in the acacia groves of this part of Egypt, or near the sepulchres of the ancient Egyptians, or in the Desert. Like the black woodpecker, it has a shrill voice which it raises and lowers, successively, uttering agreeable notes. This bird is greatly valued by the Turks and Egyptians, who, if they can take it alive, keep it in a cage for the sake of its singing. Its flesh is hard, and very well tasted, and somewhat aromatic. The dotterel is a very voracious bird, catching and devouring rats and mice, which abound in Egypt. It seldom drinks, and, when taken young and kept in a cage, they give it no water for several months, but feed it with fresh meat, macerated in water, which it devours greedily.*

The Damietta branch of the Nile is much more wooded than the Rosetta branch; willows and poplars form tufted thickets on every side, and even droop over the waters; the eye perceives in the distance vast forests of palms, and the plain is dotted with numerous turrets built for the pigeons; numerous herds of cattle pasture in the green meadows, and well-built villages rise on either bank.†

My boatmen are two brothers; the elder does nothing but smoke; the younger all the work: the latter is near-sighted, but coolly reconciles everything in the true Italian style, "Cosa-fa? Non-fa-niente." I naturally call busy-body, "Cosa-fa," and lazy-boots, "Non-fa-niente."

The country seems as fertile of sparrows as it is of grain. Aristotle, speaking of the fecundity of Egypt, says, that a woman has been known to give birth to twenty children in four accouchements! This, however, is nothing to the story told by Ibn Kathir, who relates with much gravity, that in the year 758 of the Hejira, a slave-girl in the harem of the Emir Alhamdan, brought forth at once forty children, fourteen of which were girls, the remainder boys, and all remarkable for their beauty. Jemmaled-din, who abridges the story, exclaims, and not without reason, "May God have mercy upon Ibn Kathir!" which shows, I suppose, what degree of credit he attached to his narrative.‡

Frequently the mast of a foundered vessel is seen rising out of the water. It being the grain season, and the vessels laden for the Pasha, they are, probably, wilfully scuttled. I went on shore; there was a jerm aground, and a corn vessel had been sunk near it; saw six naked black fellows jump overboard, and thought myself their prey. They seized my boat; I hastened back; they told me that their vessel was aground, and the passengers wanted to be put on shore. I went with them for that purpose; there was a company of soldiers on board, two of whom immediately jumped into our boat, and took us on a cruise. We soon fell in with a jerm, which the soldiers seized, and liberated us. One of them, when he

* Hazelquist. † Michaud et Poujoulat. ‡ Maured Allatafet.

took possession, told me that he was "a Turk—a Turk—not a fellah." Our boatmen are what are termed fellahs, that is, native labourers. Fellah seems to answer to our old word villanus, and to be synonymous with villain, as a term of reproach. Saïs is under water; nothing to be seen except the mound that indicates the ancient site, and the excavations that indicate the labour of the Arabs. They tell us that Franks, foolish Franks, come there to buy whatever is found; that only one statue or monument is left, and that, because it cannot be taken away, "not even an Englishman can move it;" it is at present under water. I here shot some beautiful birds, the entire plumage snow-white, and in form as graceful as the heron, but the body not larger than a parrot. Cosa-fa concealed them, lest the natives should be offended. This bird lives upon locusts and grasshoppers. A Dutchman would not thank me for killing a stork. The country is flat and covered with water. It resembles the sea, at least as much as do the lagunes of Venice.

Upon an artificial elevation, on the banks of the river, were huddled together men and cattle, driven from their village by this annual deluge: they will never find their houses again, for the inundation will cause them to return to the mud of which they came; however, they can soon re-earth themselves, and their houses will make good manure. I would have gone on shore, but Cosa-fa was afraid that I, in my character of Christian, might be bastonadoed. I confess that the spirit of martyrdom did not urge me on.

I observed a Turkish encampment on the bank; the cavalry were amusing themselves with the exercise of the jerreed. We steered towards them. The Turkish soldiers fight individually—each man trusts to his own prowess. In practising the jerreed he urges his horse to full speed, throws a lance, stops short in mid-gallop, and wheels suddenly. Slaves, or running-footmen in attendance pick up the lances. The variety and gaiety of their costume give a fine stage effect to this "game of soldiers." We were within a few yards of the bank, when an officer, snatching up a musket, took aim at poor Non-fa-niente, commanding him to run the boat ashore immediately, which he did. Cosa-fa said that "the officer would have shot him as soon as he would a duck, though he had better shoot a duck." A soldier came on board, and we were ordered to give him a passage to Cairo; as soon as out of gun-shot of the camp, I offered him the choice of going on shore where we then were, or on board the first vessel we should see going up the river; he preferred the latter: and, as he seemed a *bon diable*, I did not care to turn him out. The sound of music led us on shore at the village of Beara, where a "fantasia" was given to celebrate the circumcision of the village children, who, undergoing the same operation in company, may, if they can, laugh at one another. This event, which generally takes place among the peasantry when the lads are between the age of twelve and thirteen,* occasions as much rejoicing to the Mohammedan parents as the christening of a son and heir in Christendom; two drums and two squeaking pipes formed the band; eight villagers were

* Lane, Modern Egyptians.

very awkwardly, but very innocently, handling some long poles, with which they pretended to strike at one another, but gave a minute's notice as to what part of the body was the object of attack. During this, they kept time to the music like dancing bears; these poles are iron-bound at either end, and are the arms of the villagers; the dance and sham-fight are as much objects of delight to the Arabs as the Romaika to the Greeks: the jokes of our sword-stick players are serious. The band belonged to some ladies of easy, or no virtue, who graced this tournament with their company, seated on horseback, and bedizened with feathers, grease, necklaces of onions, and other attractions. The clown, upon a donkey, with his face to the tail, was the master of the ceremonies; he cleared the way for us, and did not forget backsheesh; his face was white-washed, and he was clothed, which is no slight disguise to an Arab. The ladies were without masks, which is a less happy conceit; our soldier was of considerable use in rendering the *corps de ballet* content with the proffered backsheesh: he was also himself very liberal in the use of his whip.

To avoid the current, we frequently cut across the country; occasionally aground, once so fast that we all got out to help the boat off. I am no longer astonished at the fecundity of the Delta: I was up to my knees in the alluvial deposit; and our military friend, being a heavy man, was fairly planted: I had thoughts of leaving him there to try what he would grow to. We shortly, however, regained the river. Many boats were going up; and though we could get within hail, not one would allow us to approach near; at length, the soldier concealed his red cap; we came alongside a jerm, and Don Whiskerandos jumped on board; but moving all things by his frown, he took Turkish possession of the best place—so much for the cap of liberty, the appearance of which, on board our boat, had always indicated a corsair. He was extremely proud of being a Turk, and used to tell poor Non-fa-niente that it would stain his sword to take off Arab heads. I had a pocket-pistol, which was a subject of great ridicule to him: he conceived it impossible that so short a barrel could be of any service, and almost enticed me to fire at him. His own pistol was nearly as long as a blunderbuss.

Menouf, on the north side of the canal of the same name, is a large village, which, according to the inhabitants and Dr. Pococke, is a city:* it is surrounded by an embankment of rubbish. At first it is almost impossible to conceive how such mounds could be formed; but, considering the cheapness of crockery-ware, and the fragility of mud-houses, the laziness of the people who never repair, and who are not compelled to carry the rubbish beyond the outskirts of the town, the wonder nearly ceases. At Menouf is a manufactory of mats, made of rushes; they are exported throughout Turkey. There are no remnants of ancient buildings, except that in a mosque are some columns of cipolino and granite; columns are bought wholesale for this use. On leaving Menouf, we had some difficulty in finding a hole to hide our boat in: great apprehension of land pirates. At day-break, drew our boat over land into a garden ditch, by which means we entered the canal of Harien: moored at

* Description of the East.

the mouth of it. At 7 A.M. entered the Damietta branch of the Nile, and floated down to Semenhoud: the remains of an ancient building are here to be seen; that is, a piece of masonry has been discovered, and recovered; but it is uncovered as often as any one will give backsheesh. This town is not ill-built, and has a population of between three and four thousand. It marks the site of the ancient Sebenitus.*

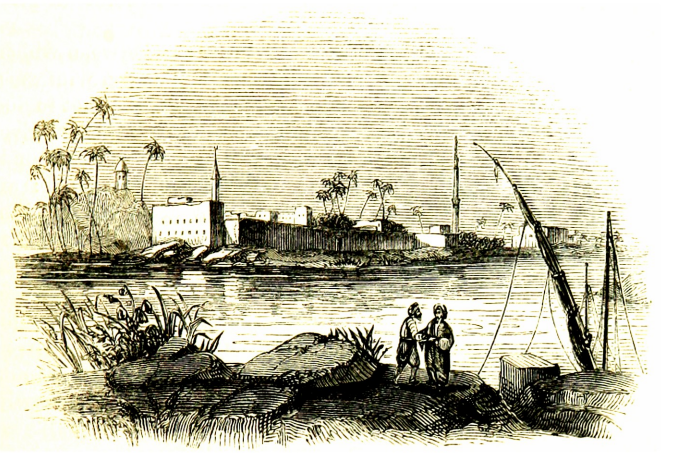
Left Semenhoud: in two hours landed on the west bank, opposite to Wheesh, and in half an hour reached the ruins of Beybait: here was once a granite temple, the materials, the style, and the hieroglyphics of which, rendered it perhaps one of the most beautiful in Egypt: there is not now one stone upon another in the order they ought to be in; it is fallen into a mass like the temple of Hercules at Girgenti. I was ruminating on the strength of Samson, when an Arab of the neighbouring village gave me the following tradition:—Mohammed passing by the temple, applied to a Christian for a bit of bread; the Christian refused: the temple fell immediately, and the town went to ruins. To this he added:—"You Franks come here to look for treasure because your ancestors built these temples; there were a great many more in the kingdom, but Mohammed destroyed them all, and you are a blasted people." Such ideas naturally suggest themselves to Arab minds, when they see Franks carrying away mummies with as much anxiety as if related to them, and blocks of masonry as if they had found the philosopher's stone. The relics of Beybait are worth visiting: the hieroglyphics are on granite, beautifully executed, and there is nothing to disturb you but owls and jackals.

On our way down the river we encountered a sandstorm; all our sails were immediately reefed; clouds of dust overhung us; a huge column advanced towards our kanjia, and for a moment I thought we should be submerged. It disappeared, however, suddenly, and was swallowed up noiselessly by the waters of the Nile, like a vast phantom that had quitted for awhile the regions of darkness to threaten and disappear. In about an hour the sky cleared up, and the minarets of Mansoura (the Zoan of Scripture†) appeared on our right. This town is of no very ancient date. It took its rise subsequently to the sixth crusade; for after the siege of Damietta by the Christians, the Sultan fell back to the right bank of the Ashmoun canal with his army; tents were first erected, then houses, then palaces, then mosques. Mansoura, like Cairo, was a camp before it was a city. It gives its name to a province, of which it is the capital, and is renowned for its salubrity, patients being sent thither from Cairo and even Damietta. I visited the famous canal of Ashmoun, called by the crusaders the canal of Tannis. We found the place where the engineer of Saint Louis undertook to construct a causeway, and farther on, the ford over which the Christian army passed.‡

We now entered the canal leading to Menzaleh: our boatmen were very unwilling; they had "never been there before, and the people might be savages;" at length, with backsheesh in one hand and stick in the other, I persuaded them. At the village of Mersy we endea-

* Michaud et Poujoulat. † Pococke. ‡ Michaud et Poujoulat.

voured to procure some bread, but it was impossible; the Pasha's agents having accurately calculated to a tooth the quantity of grain requisite for the village, had sent the overplus to the Pasha's granary. A crowd of women and children came to the boat: I commenced a sketch; all my subjects



Mansoura.

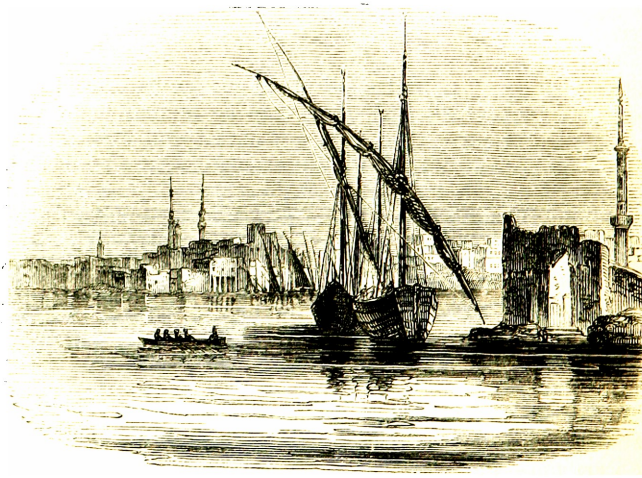
ran away shrieking. Cosa-fa begged me to put up my pencil; the villagers imagined that I was writing talismans, and he himself knew the force of magic. He had been in love with a fair one who despised the charms of his face and fortune; at length he procured a subtler spell, and, though neither himself nor his Dulcinea could read, she was so afraid that she acceded to his proposals. The charm had cost him a dollar: the Bank of England could not have found one more serviceable. This is distressing, as it is common to observe the fear and superstition of the people in general; a pen will put them to flight; a hat, though looked upon as the ensign of freedom, will clear a field of workmen, will irritate the dogs, and even the buffalo; that animal that used to *alarm us*, will break from its labour at the approach of a Frank.

About four miles south-east of Mersy is a mound of rubbish, to which we were directed in pursuance of our inquiries concerning antiquities. The waters were out—the way dangerous and intricate: at length a guide appeared, curiosity induced me, and money prevailed on him to proceed. A considerable part of the distance we waded nearly breast-high, for which we were half-stripped, (N.B., leeches here), but of the temple, there are only two small parcels of worthless granite. The rushes that grow here are of a three-sided or prismatic form, lately cut, perhaps the papyrus plant; if not, I have seen none since leaving Syracuse. There were cattle upon the mounds; and it was remarkable that whenever a hoof had been impressed at the water's edge, the indentation was covered with a lamina of salt, having

the appearance of ice, yet the water is perfectly fresh, the sand alone being impregnated with salt. Those who work in salt mines are subject to a complaint in the eyes; perhaps the ophthalmia is in some measure to be attributed to the same cause. The excursion occupied four hours. A man in his own country will scarcely deviate from the road to see a lake or a cathedral: in a strange land where he cannot move without danger and an interpreter, he pries into everything.

From Mansoura to Menzaleh cost us three days; between which latter place and Mersy we saw other rubbish mounds, but were informed that there were not even stones there. I had sufficiently cooled not to doubt my informant. Menzaleh is a large town, and gives name to the lake. Even here, however, it was with great difficulty that we could procure rice and bread.

We succeeded in dragging our bark into the lake of Menzaleh: and were taken in tow by the Damietta passage-boat. A rapid sail of four hours brought us to the Garden of Palm-trees. The Lake of Menzaleh abounds with fishermen and fish, great quantities of which, especially a sort of mullet, are brought to Damietta. Their roes, when cured, are called botargo. When they desire to preserve them in the best manner, they dip them in wax, and carry them not only all over Turkey, but also to many parts of Christendom.* A beggar living on a scrap of an island, about five yards square, called loudly as we passed for his daily bread, which



Damietta.

was thrown to him. Rows of pelicans stretched along the smooth surface of the water; they appear even more beautiful when on wing; they resemble swans, while at the same time part of their plumage is rose-coloured, and glistens to the sun.

* Pococke.

There is no inn at Damietta: I therefore lodged in the house of the English Vice-Consul. His table is hospitably spread: beds there are none; he allowed us to sleep upon the boards, but the musquitoes would not. Thus far our journey has been tedious and unsatisfactory. One village is remarkable as having a house one story high; it must belong to a man of consequence. It contains a mat, a coffee-pot, cups, spoons, bowls, earthen vessels, water-jars, pumpkins, and two stones for pounding corn; hoopoes, hawks, doves, and sparrows abound, and live together in apparent harmony.

We dined with Signor ——, rich, fat, and jolly. To be rich is to be fat—fat is an evil less than care. There are many extraordinary things in his house; excellent and various wines, with a free use thereof; knives, forks, and chairs; books, and the assurance that your host can read and write. Dinner was served *à l'Anglaise*—at least so it was thought to be; excepting a capon, its head stretched out like that of a flying wild duck, and its legs in the act of supplication, all the meats were in scraps, according to the custom of a country where knives and forks are unknown, and though we had also these rarities, even our host's son did not understand the use of them, but ate with his fingers. A slave was in attendance upon each to brush away the flies. These animals seem to have emigrated from Alexandria. Dinner was finished by half-past one, mid-day; water was poured over our hands, followed by *eau de rose*. Pipes and coffee were then served, and our host retired to his "siesta." He generally reads himself to sleep, and his library furnishes plenty of soporifics. The common wine in use here is imported from Cyprus in goat-skins; it is sold at about a penny a gallon, but is not worth so much; it tastes of the skin. There is no memento of St. Louis and the Crusades, save the name.

The extent and population of this city have often been very greatly exaggerated. Instead of the seventy or eighty thousand inhabitants, which many have supposed it to contain, it possesses, at the utmost, from twenty-five to thirty thousand. The principal buildings worthy of notice are the mosques, rice-warehouses, barracks, and military school. The modern city has been built at about the distance of two leagues from the site of the Damietta of the Crusaders. Many of the houses are spacious and stand in the midst of extensive gardens. They are flat-roofed and furnished with terraces, from which can be descried in the distance the course of the Nile; the streets are wider than those of the capital; the air circulates freely through them, and as the heat is thus tempered, the inhabitants are compelled to take fewer precautions against the sun. Rain is frequent, especially in winter. The pompous descriptions which have been given of the environs of Damietta must be received with some reserve. However, there is much to admire in the vast rice-fields, which form the source of the city's wealth, and the extensive meadows intersected by a thousand canals, whose waters disappear beneath the green shade of the lotus. I often wandered forth amidst these beautiful scenes, gazing on the groves of citron and orange-trees, the palm-woods, the plantations of sycamores, the gardens where grow the broad-leaved banana-tree, the pomegranate with its scarlet blossom, and the lovely cassia.

The people of Damietta appear less indolent than the Caireens; fewer

jugglers and dancers are seen in the streets, and fewer idlers in the coffee-houses. Damietta has its almé, but they do not make their appearance in public places. The rich often give concerts, to which the singers of the country are invited; and, to certain musical parties are brought nightingales trained to sing in concert.

The city has some fine bazaars, which were evidently built at the time when commerce was flourishing. Damietta carried on formerly an extensive trade with Syria, Cyprus, and Marseilles; it received the silks of Mount Lebanon, the tobacco of Lattakia, the soap of Palestine, the wood of Asia Minor, and furnished to all these countries the productions of Egypt. But monopoly and heavy duties have cut off these sources of prosperity. Damietta has no longer any connection with Cyprus. The mouth of the Nile is no longer visited by vessels from France, or Italy. Formerly ships from Marseilles came to fetch the finest rice produced in Egypt. But since the Pasha has placed himself at the head of agricultural industry, and that attempts have been made to improve the method of preparing rice, it has come to pass that the rice of Damietta has deteriorated in quality, and that, in all the markets of Europe, it has been unable to compete with that of Lombardy and Piedmont. On entering Egypt by the Nile, the decline of commerce and industry becomes evident even to the eye. When we passed Rosetta, the Nile was covered with sails; at Damietta, there were but a few jerms that had escaped the shallows of the Bogaz.

Many Arab historians tell us that Damietta was formerly celebrated for its jasmin-oil,* and its tissues of gold and silk: it no longer manufactures any rich stuffs, but still furnishes table napkins to all Egypt and the neighbouring countries. This branch of industry, which affords occupation to a great number of artisans in the city and the villages on the banks of the Nile, would suffice to maintain the people in comfort if the Pasha had not interfered, and imposed a heavy tax.†

But it is not, perhaps, so much the amount of the taxes paid as the manner in which they are collected, that causes the ruin of the peasantry. According to the Pasha's execrable system, each man is liable for the debts of his neighbour, each village for the debts of the neighbouring village, and each district for the district adjoining. It is therefore next to impossible that the population of Egypt should be a thriving one. Scarcely, in fact, can people desire to amass property, when the laziness or the misfortune of others may at any moment furnish the government with an excuse for depriving them of it. This new mode of raising a revenue is said to have been invented by Mahmoud Bey, who, in consequence, rose greatly in his master's favour. Guttemberg in discovering the art of printing, Christopher Columbus in opening a new world to mankind, did not experience a livelier joy than this Albanian, when he formed in the recesses of his mind the new financial system which was destined to be so profitable to the coffers of his lord and master, Mohammed Ali. Mahmoud Bey presented himself in a state of triumphant exultation in the palace of his highness; he gave to his gracious

* Abdellatif. † Michaud et Poujoulat.

sovereign the paper on which was traced his famous plan. Mohammed Ali read and re-read this precious memoir, then grasped the paper firmly in his hands, and exclaimed in an ecstatic transport of joy, "Oh, peki! peki! a thousand times peki! Thou art a man of genius, O Mahmoud Bey! Henceforth the population of Egypt shall pay its debts, past, present, and future!" An European consul was present at this scene; Mohammed Ali was unable to contain himself before him. In what way could Mahmoud Bey be rewarded for having rendered such a service to the state? The viceroy nominated him Minister at War!

To illustrate the practical working of this system, I may relate two or three anecdotes, which, however exaggerated they may seem, are perfectly in keeping with the manners of the country. A short time ago, a peasant found himself utterly unable to pay the miri and the other taxes; all that remained to him was an ox. His father had left him this, and for no consideration was he inclined to part with it. Pay he must, however, or die under the stick. The fellah was therefore obliged to go and sell his ox at the yearly fair of Farescouz, not far from Damietta. The peasant demanded six hundred piastres for his beast, but no purchaser presented himself. A Frank, inhabiting Damietta, happened to be at this fair of Farescouz. He offered six hundred piastres to the fellah for his ox, but he could not pay this sum in less than forty days. What was to be done? The stick was raised over the head of the fellah. The sequel was this—a tax-gatherer bought his ox for one hundred and fifty piastres. But this is not all. Wait awhile. When the rice harvest was got in, and the government had paid the amount of it, the same tax-gatherer forced the fellah to buy back the ox for six hundred piastres!

On another occasion, two of these agents happened to be in a village not far from Damietta. It was evening; some fellahs were smoking the chibouk in the sheikh's house, constructed of the mud of the Nile, like all the others in the Delta. The two tigers were this time sitting in the midst of the sheep, without having much the appearance of desiring to devour them; but suddenly one of the Turks perceived a few grains of rice on a peasant's beard. The poor devil had forgotten his after-supper ablution.

"You have been eating rice, you wretch!" cried the tax-gatherers in a terrible voice.

"I assure you, effendi, that I have not eaten rice," replied the trembling fellah.

The two Turks entered the peasant's hut, and searched carefully for hidden rice, but found none. What then did these two Turks do? They compelled the fellah to swallow soap-water, that they might convince themselves he had eaten rice! After this, they administered two hundred strokes with the stick on the soles of his feet. O Egyptian civilisation!

Under all circumstances, the bastinado is the tax-gatherer's instrument in Egypt. If a man be rich, more than he owes is required of him, and he is bastinadoed till he pays; if he be poor, demands are still made upon him, and he is bastinadoed till he robs or borrows wherewith to satisfy the claims of government. What a Jesuit once said of China is equally true

of Egypt,—it is the stick that governs it,—all ranks receive the stick, which falls, however, as a matter of course, most heavily on the poor, especially when they owe anything to the treasury; this almost necessarily excites in them the spirit of resistance, which, however, is most passive in its character. When they happen to possess money, they will almost submit to be flayed alive sooner than part with it, and often refuse to pay their taxes till they have been well bastinadoed, thus apparently justifying the opinion of Abderrahman Bey. But they know their government, and are apprehensive that, if they paid their taxes too easily, they would shortly be called upon for twice as much. This circumstance accounts for the occurrence of such scenes as the following:—

A fellah declared with many protestations that he was unable to pay his tax, amounting, I think, to 15 or 20 piastres. He was ordered by the proper functionary to receive a certain number of blows upon the soles of his feet, which were inflicted with such skill and violence as to extort the most piteous groans and exclamations. The sufferer, upon being released, was unable, for a considerable time, to stand upon his feet. When at length he was able to advance towards the magistrate's seat, he was asked again if he would pay his tax. He re-affirmed, with many solemn protestations, his utter inability to comply with the demand; a punishment still more severe was immediately ordered; the poor man was laid again upon his face, and was held down by two soldiers, while the practised operator returned to his task with increased vigour. The culprit struggled and screamed as in the last agonies, and finally swooned before the claims of justice were satisfied; after some time had elapsed, he recovered so far as to be able to hobble up to the tribunal, where he kissed the hand of the officer, and thanked him for his great lenity, promising to bring the money and pay the demand of the government without further delay.*

On arriving once at Mansoura, I paid a visit to the governor of the city, who filled also the office of revenue-collector of the beautiful and rich province of Sharkieh. This collector, who is no more than twenty-seven years of age, is called Abderrahman Bey. He is by birth a Copt. Abderrahman passed his youth in the palace of Mohammed Ali as writer to his highness. He received the title of Bey when he renounced the faith of Christ to embrace that of Mohammed. Abderrahman is thin, and not more than four feet in height. He has a little unbearded face, with an expression of mingled gentleness and ferocity impossible to define. Such is the type of a collector. No one knows better than he how to screw the taxes out of the fellahs. These never pronounce without trembling the name of Abderrahman Bey. Abderrahman is the demon, the terror, the affright, of the inhabitants of the province of Sharkieh. I found him sitting at the corner of a handsome scarlet divan. By his side was an Italian, his private medical attendant. The Bey received me with distinguished politeness. Five pipes were offered me in rapid succession by his slaves; the coffee, the sherbet, the sweetmeats, which he graciously shared with me, were handed to me on plates of silver, fashioned in rich oriental style.

* Olin.

"How did you find the country which you have crossed in coming from Cairo to Mansoura?" inquired the Bey.

"Admirable, your excellence, admirable; Lower Egypt is a perfect terrestrial paradise; but it is painful to behold, in the midst of this Eden, a population so unhappy. These poor fellahs have no bread to eat. Yesterday evening, I saw in the village of Fisbeh, five hours from Mansoura, peasants supping on clover and thistles."

"These fellahs are so miserly!" answered the Bey with a grimace, which sufficiently expressed his regret for having asked me the first question.

I continued: "The peasants have nothing wherewith to clothe themselves: I have seen young women, young girls, old men, children, with no other clothing than a miserable piece of stuff round their loins."

"These fellahs are in civil costume," said the Italian doctor with a smile.

"Methinks the doctor might have chosen a more fitting theme for his jokes."

"I will explain myself," proceeded the medical man. "A hundred fellahs, in the costume you observed in the Delta, were taken, some time ago, for the army. They were conducted to Cairo, into the court of the Minister at War's palace. A few Turks and some Europeans attached to the Egyptian government happened at this moment to be in the Minister's reception hall. Among the Europeans was a Frenchman, who was surgeon in one of Ibrahim's regiments. He looked into the court and said, 'Here come some conscripts.'—'In uniform?' inquired the Minister. 'No, your Excellency,' replied the Frenchman very seriously, 'the conscripts are still in civil costume.' The Minister, the Turk, the European, surprised at this answer, rose, approached the window, and beheld a troop of men either in rags or completely naked. At this a general laugh was raised. Those words, 'The conscripts are still in civil costume,' have become quite famous among the French established in Cairo and Alexandria. It is no longer said, in speaking of the fellahs, 'They are covered with rags,' but 'They are in civil costume.'"

Let us now return to Abderrahman Bey, who could not help laughing at the doctor's narrative.

"You will have a false idea of the condition of the peasantry of Egypt," said the Bey, "if you judge them from their costume and their bad food, which they take pleasure in displaying to all travellers. I have already told you that these people are excessively avaricious. I may add that they have hidden treasures in the earth; the proof of which is, that the fellahs bring them forth when compelled by the bastinado. The province of Mansoura, or Sharkieh, has eight hundred villages; it owed one hundred and fifty thousand purses to my master's treasury. Before my time no collector could obtain a para of this sacred debt. I have been in my place only eight months, and the fellahs owe only eighteen purses. Pasha-el-Kebir has received this money; and has done me the honour to give me, as a recompense for this poor service, the title of general. May God preserve the days of his highness!"

The Bey, however, did not relate to me all the atrocities he committed to wring these hundred and fifty thousand purses from the fellahs. He had caused thirty-six of them to die under the stick! The cruel renegade became so hateful to me, when I heard of these enormities, that I could not make up my mind to go and pay him my adieus. It is well to observe that these hundred and fifty thousand purses were not owed by those who paid them. They were the debts of a number of villages that no longer exist.

A sheikh, who had been ruined by taxation, one day observed to me: "Listen to the following story. You will recognise in it the image of the justice of Mohammed Ali, on whom be the curse of God! There lived at Menouf a rich manufacturer of silk.—One night a robber broke into his house. Having no light with him, this malefactor ran his eye against a nail which stuck out from the wall, and blinded himself. Discomfited by this accident, he got out of the house as well as he could, whilst the manufacturer still slept. Next day the robber went to complain to the governor of Cairo, whose name was Haraos; he told him that the manufacturer of silk had put him to sleep in a room, in the wall of which were nails, and that, being without a candle, he had knocked out his eye. The governor ordered the manufacturer to be brought before him, and said, 'When a man sticks nails in the walls of his house, he must take care and give a light to those who come and ask hospitality of him. You have not done so, and justice requires that my cawass thrust out your eye, as one of your nails has thrust out the eye of this man. That's all.'

Egyptian Merchant.

"'But I do not know this man; I have never seen him.'

"'Silence!' exclaimed the governor. 'Guards, seize this manufacturer of silk, and thrust a nail into his eye.'

"'A moment! a moment!' cried the inhabitant of Menouf. 'My neighbour is a man who passes his life in shooting the birds of the Nile; one eye is enough for him; shall I bring him before you?'

"'Very good!' said Haraos.

"The hunter accordingly was brought to Cairo, where his eye was thrust out. The responsibility established by Mohammed Ali is nothing else—what I can't pay, my neighbour must. In this way we are both ruined at the same time."*

In the Nile, near Damietta, dolphins, it is said, have always been common;† and, according to an Arabic historian, the hippopotamus also was anciently found in this part of the river. The hippopotami of those days, however, will seem to have been far more bold and ferocious than those at present found in the Nile. They now only show themselves at night, and that with the greatest possible caution, whereas, in the thirteenth century, they used to attack boats in open daylight, and when they could succeed in upsetting them, devoured their crew. A couple of these animals, more enterprising than their fellows, were accustomed, it is said, to make excursions into the neighbouring fields, where they snapped up indiscriminately whatever fell in their way, cows, fellahs, and even buffaloes! It was in vain that the inhabitants collected together, and sought to kill them. In all encounters the hippopotami were victorious. At length, however, a number of hunters were sent for from Nubia, who, being accustomed to the sport, soon delivered the good people of Damietta from their persecutors.‡ Occasionally, during the inundation, crocodiles are still carried down to the sea, though they have never, I believe, been found in the Rosetta branch; but the hippopotamus has not, for many centuries, been seen in Egypt.

On quitting Damietta I determined to visit Sann and Pelusium, the Kashiff having given me a favourite slave as a guard, and promised that at Matarieh we should be furnished with a sheikh to guide us. We were soon on board our little skiff once more. The slave lent to be our guard was a black, in himself a host, armed with a brace of horse-pistols, a sabre, and a firelock. In four hours we landed at Matarieh. Matarieh gives name to two small islands, covered with wretched habitations: its trade consists in salt-fish and botargo; the former was in perfection, if I might judge by my nose. Tame pelicans are in constant attendance to receive the overplus of the miraculous draughts of fishes taken at this place. The price of a pelican is two piastres. We were delayed here all night for a guide. The sheikh sent in that capacity had a patriarchal appearance. We steered for Sann, where we arrived in twelve hours. We were hailed (four A.M.) by the Cavaliere Frediani and M. Gemini; the latter was "chancellor," *i. e.* secretary, to the English Consul at Damietta. At Sann we saw six obelisks; their bases vary from six to seven feet; on each is a perpendicular row of hieroglyphics; all are prostrate: but it appears that they did stand in a direct line drawn east and west, in length about one hundred and sixty yards; at either end are blocks of granite, so that this place was probably *once* worth seeing—for farther particulars inquire of Denon. Upon one of the highest mounds is a heap of bricks and stones: every passing Mussulman adds something to the pile. I was requested to do the same; it is the burying place of a sheikh or saint; the object is to perpetuate his memory.

* Baptistin Poujoulat. † Sicard. ‡ Abdellatif.

We paraded a small village in search of provisions;—surrounded by the astonished natives; the object of curiosity, a hat. A man requested permission to put mine on his head, for he had seen the consuls in the Levant, who, notwithstanding their Eastern robes, wore a hat in token of freedom; and he wished to be free. Those who were not acquainted with the property of the hat of Fortunatus, laughed immoderately at it.

I agreed to accompany the cavaliere to the Tanitic branch, and to cross the lake. While I slept, blackie gave orders to moor in the sedge; waking I missed the other boat; after four hours' search I rejoined it and accepted the offer of going aboard. Here I dismissed Cosa-fa, Non-fa-niente, and Othello; the black refused to go, and stating that he was the favourite of the governor, and I only a Christian, ordered both boats home. He also threatened the men of the other with a bastinado for daring to bring Christians on the lake without permission; the men who knew the power of a favourite slave, were inclined to obey him, and it was with some difficulty I changed my quarters. Blackie insisted on coming also; he fired his pistols and reloaded them; he then put his bundle into our boat; it was thrown back, and he submitted; I gave Cosa-fa a note to the Consul at Rosetta; I refused also to take the sheikh, till, being informed that he was necessary to our safety, and that any accident which might happen to us, would be visited upon him, I gave assent. We proceeded by the Tanitic branch to the opening "Om Faraj." This mouth is about one hundred yards in width, but too shallow for even our boat to pass; dolphins sported round; the sheikh requested me not to fire at them, as the crew classically believe that they assist drowning mariners. Do they not give notice of storms?

The lake is celebrated for the great number of birds that are taken on its banks. The most remarkable is the flamingo, from the tongues of which they now make oil instead of eating them, as in the time of the Romans, who esteemed them a great delicacy. Under the emperors Egypt paid a part of its tribute in flamingo-tongues. The waters of Lake Menzaleh are less disagreeably salt than those of the sea. The rice growing on its banks is in much repute, which is doubtless to be attributed to the quality of the soil impregnated with salt, everywhere seen crusting the surface.*

From Om Faraj we directed our course towards the Bubastic branch. I went on shore shooting; the Cavaliere, the Cancelliere, the Sheikh, and another, joined me.—We proposed to visit Pelusium, and a Bedouin encampment. After three hours' walk we arrived at the "Bubastic Mouth," which we forded, knee-deep. It is a hundred yards wide. We soon came within sight of a long dark rag, flapping in the wind; and this the Sheikh informed us was the outpost of the Bedouins—not in our route, but it was judged better to visit than to be visited. We marched towards it, our guide giving us instructions as to our line of conduct. We had a boisterous but friendly welcome: when once an Arab has given his faith, his hospitality is inviolable. We sat down cross-legged; coffee was prepared. The Arabs swore "by the Sun" that we

* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

were safe, and offered to conduct us to their encampment, at the Roman mountain, "Gebel Romano." One of the Bedouins, an invalid, requested advice, concluding that we, being Franks, were of necessity skilled in medicine, though not one of us had more right to the title of doctor than if we had bought diplomas—if such things are to be bought. Our sick friend offered us, however, room for "twenty-one days," and every other requisite that Bedouins can offer; we arranged that he should accompany us to his party at Gebel Romano, and to our boat on the following day for medicine: thus his illness insured our welfare. Four hours' walk, and quite dark, when the assault of dogs warned us of our approach to the habitations of men or Bedouins. A party were seated on the sand round a glimmering fire; an occasional ray exhibited them to horrible advantage: ten men, with black beards, white teeth, half-clothed, and completely armed; what would Mrs. Radcliffe have given to have seen them, or I to have been away? Bandits, when out-banditted on the stage, are gentlemen in appearance compared to these Bedouins. They sprang up, as if taken by surprise; we performed the ceremony of Salam Aleikoom with the whole party. In a few minutes a blazing fire was furnished by hospitality and curiosity; our number increased by at least fifty, all armed; for arms are the first, and clothing a very secondary consideration. Pipes, coffee, boiled rice, and bread, in form and thinness resembling pancakes, were soon prepared. These inhabitants of the desert "practise the laws of good breeding" with a punctilio that even Frenchmen would call ultra-polite. Whenever an elderly man made his appearance, the whole party invariably stood up, and unconscious of the applause that such conduct ever obtained, offered the seat, according to priority of years. Women were seen gliding among the trees, more anxious to see than to be seen! The Frank fowling-piece is greatly admired. English gunpowder is compared with Turkish: the grains of the latter are nearly as large as mustard-seed. Having been drawn on this expedition from a shooting walk, I had come without either coat, shoes, or stockings, and now had leisure to feel the cold. I requested to be shown to my bed-room; did not expect a flat-candlestick and a pan of coals; but having been invited to a residence for three weeks, I did hope for a hut of some kind. There was not one without women; and to be admitted into the same apartment with the females, would be an innovation unprecedented in Arabian customs. We were therefore desired to huddle together in the sand, and a rush mat, big enough for the great bed at Ware, was spread over the whole party. Twelve Bedouins mounted guard in a circle round us; one of them taking notice that I placed my fowling-piece carefully by my side, tied an old gun-barrel to a stick, without a lock, and offered it to my neighbour. Our guard disencumbered themselves of their clothes, and placing them upon their heads, were soon asleep in the sand. We did not indulge in bed after daybreak; a sheep was killed, and *déjeûner sans fourchette* prepared; bread, rice, coffee, boiled mutton, and pipes; fingers supplied the place of forks; this hastily finished, we took leave and scrambled up a lofty ridge of sands; where it is said that Pompey was killed, and hence the name Gebel Romano.

Notwithstanding the fatigue of the ascent, we were followed by all the invalids of the village, not only those really unwell, but those who fancied themselves so, and others who begged for physic, that they might be so; I prescribed for them all; for many of them a bastinado, which prescription was received with great good humour. A plain of sand leads to Pelusium, a lamina of salt, about an inch in thickness, and of a pale rose colour, forms a surface over many hollow places (natural salt-beds) in the sand. Accompanied by the invalid and three others, four hours' march brought us to the groundwork of Pelusium. Pelusium is said to have been the "key of Egypt," and to have "been sacked three times." There is nothing to disprove the latter assertion. Of its boasted magnificence, four red granite columns remain, and some few fragments of others.

It was dark ere we regained the lake of Menzaleh; as we entered into it we were hailed, and ordered to bring to; we could distinguish two large boats moored in the sedge; returned no answer to the first order; to the second, asked by whose command? "The governor of Matarieh is here in person." The cavaliere, who had lived some time in Egypt, concluded that it was a "ruse des Bedouins," for they are generally reputed robbers, and two men were on board our boat; we held these two in surveillance and crowded all sail; the two boats followed, and, notwithstanding our repeated threats to fire, still approached; we fired across the bow of the nearest: "No bono," was the reply; "you have shot at the governor;" the boats sheered off, and we pursued our course to the islet of Tenneys, where we moored about four hours after midnight. At daybreak we discovered two kanjias, a broad red flag flying, and two swallow-tailed pennants. "The governor, really the governor," was the reiterated exclamation of the frightened Sheikh and crew: while we were disputing what ought to be done, two slaves from the governor's boat came to ours with provisions. We now agreed that the English secretary should go and demand satisfaction for the conduct of Blackie; this was followed by the present of a live sheep (a peace offering). The governor himself descended from his boat, and we went to meet him, told him that we came to desire that Blackie might be punished for his violence. The good old governor almost in tears replied, "I have punished him for daring to return without you. Do you wish for his head? I have brought you bread and meat and water, and hearing that your boat was uncomfortable, there is a kanjia at your service; and when at Cairo you mention this affair to the Pasha, make it not against me." We went on board the governor's boat, where we were presented with coffee, sweetmeats, and pipes. On returning to my own, we found the slaves waiting for backsheesh. It is an insult to the master not to reward his servant; custom requires it to be done in gold, and at least to the full value of the present. One of the Bedouins, seeing us at a loss, took the rag from his head, and offered us as much gold as we might desire. The policy of the Pasha of Egypt induces him to show every attention to Franks, and the governor of Matarieh was therefore afraid lest any complaint should be made against himself. The slave, who knew his own power over his *master*, had treated us as Turks ordinarily treat Christians. Slaves in

general have an ascendancy over their employers, and are not to be killed and stuffed for a museum *ad libitum.**

Tennys has been thoroughly ransacked, the virtuosi having carried away every sign of its former grandeur, except a small cistern encrusted similarly to those of the "Sette sub," at Rome. To the west is the island of Toomah, where is the burial-place of a sheikh,—a small room hung with strings of wooden beads like a button-maker's shop; in the centre is a square frame covered with green cloth, on which is embroidered a text from the Koran. One of our boatmen, who wore a long string of coarse beads round his neck, was said to be a priest, and entered this chamber uttering dismal yells. Then shutting his eyes, and reiterating "Allah hu!" he continued walking round till I complained of the ear-ache, when he tore off a scrap of the cloth, and giving it to me demanded backsheesh.

Having visited the Debbee, or False Mouth, we returned to Damietta, and found there Cosa-fa and Non-fa-niente. The note to the consul at Rosetta was written on so small a piece of paper, that Cosa-fa thought it resembled too much an order for a bastinado to contain any good, and the poor fellow was afraid to go home; for had he returned without a certificate of my safety, he would have been imprisoned; and had he not also had a good character of himself, he would have been bastinadoed. Such regulations, though a melancholy necessity, are a restraint upon guides, and ensure the safety of the travellers. In the more dangerous parts it is by no means uncommon for a guide to leave his son in hostage for the travellers' safety, the sins of the father being visited upon the children in many cases by the Turkish law.

I gave up my design of navigating the Alvey canal on finding that it would cost ten additional days, and afford no gratification. We had already lost thirty to the same effect. I renewed my engagement with Coso-fa, taking care at the same time to provide myself with a bastinado stick; notwithstanding which, we advanced on our voyage like snails. It is but a cowardly thing to beat an Arab, they are so used to it. The English who complain so much of the want of liberty have at least that of returning a blow. Among our delays must be reckoned a stoppage at Mansoura for the purpose of visiting Tmai. The waters were unabated, and, with some difficulty, we procured a rude species of fen-duck boat. Three of us contrived to balance ourselves in it, and leaving Mansoura at twelve o'clock, about half-past four reached Tmai. But a few years since, here stood a temple, which, according to report, was one of the least injured and most beautiful in Egypt; what ought to have preserved it has caused its destruction. It is now in worse condition than the temple of Beybait. There is scarcely a stone unturned and unbroken. "If gold be not concealed in them," say the Arabs, "why are the Franks at the trouble of visiting and the expense of carrying away these stones?" I searched till nearly sunset, but in vain, for any object that might satisfy my labour and curiosity. Suddenly I was startled by most dismal cries, such as Hecate would have ordered by particular desire for the entertainment of

* Sir Frederick Henniker.

Macbeth's witches: running suddenly towards the spot whence the sound proceeded, I discovered an assembly of jackals at their evening conversazione. Their tones are the most unhappy variations of the dying howl of a dog and the amorous ditty of a cat. I would fain have shot any of the serenaders. We again balanced ourselves in the canoe, and about an hour after midnight regained Mansoura, not only cold and tired, but having been for many hours wet to the skin, owing to the dew; "it droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven" with a vengeance. Having satisfied our curiosity as far as concerned this part of Egypt, we returned by the shortest route to Rosetta.

CHAPTER VIII.

JOURNEY ACROSS THE DELTA.

WE left Rosetta about eight o'clock in the morning, and shortly afterwards, struck off into the desert, which, immediately south of the mosque of Abou-Mandour, comes down close to the water's edge. Very heavy rain having fallen during the two preceding nights, the blades of a fine tender grass were this morning quite thick among the loose sand, giving their wavy surface an appearance of verdure, which convinces me that water only is wanted to render even the Desert fertile. Here and there several small groves of date-palms enlivened the waste, which, ascending and descending in strongly-marked undulations, wore a very striking aspect.

Mosque of Abou Mandour.

In a short time, diverging a little to the left, we came down to the bank of the river, directly opposite the great bend which it here makes towards

the east, and, on turning round, enjoyed a noble prospect of the convent of Abou Mandour, with its elegant dome and minaret, embosomed in palm-trees; and, beyond these, the city and orange-groves of Rosetta, beautified by distance. The Nile is here exceedingly deep; its banks are perpendicular; and, notwithstanding the decrease of the inundation, the water was not many feet below the level of the land. Our path-way, which ran close along the edge of the stream, proved, in many places, barely wide enough to allow of the passing of a single beast between the sand-hills and the water, and so unstable and slippery, that the smallest degree of unsteadiness would inevitably have precipitated us into the Nile.

For some hours our road still continued to lead through the Desert, or over those fields, once fertile, which its perpetual encroachments have snatched from cultivation; once, in the midst of this sterile tract, we passed by a lofty ancient tower, in the Saracenic style, standing in the sands, close to the deserted mosque or convent of *Mesa*. The character of the country now changed. From a bare waste expanse, whose surface is the perpetual plaything of the winds, we entered upon a marsh, adorned, in many parts, by groves of date-trees, and various kinds of shrubs, rushes, reeds, and other aquatic plants. Scattered here and there among these woods and copses were numerous sheets of clear water, which beautifully reflected the passing clouds, and on whose surface were seen, on all sides, snipes, curlews, wild-ducks, with large flights of the white ibis, or paddy-bird, moving hither and thither, or settling on the branches of the trees, like immense snow-drops. The appearance of these diminutive lakes, running in various shapes among low sandy shores, their surface dotted with small bosky islands, or with mud-banks, covered with a thick efflorescence of salt, as white as snow, was exceedingly picturesque.

At length, after a ride of several hours, we arrived at Tifeny, a village situated on both sides of the Nile, where we were to cross over into the Delta. There being no caravanserai at this place, we halted by a sheikh's tomb close to the river, where our beasts were unladen. Dates, butter and excellent buffalo's milk, with bread, brought from Alexandria, constituted our mid-day meal, which we ate sitting in the sun, while the muezzin, from the minaret of a neighbouring mosque, was summoning the faithful to *Salah-il-Dohr*, or "noon-prayer," which is generally repeated, however, when the sun begins to decline.* On the margin of the river, various operations connected with the domestic economy of the Arabs, were, at the same time, going on. There was a man cutting up, upon the mud, a buffalo, which he had just killed, while the dogs were lapping the blood. Three or four parties were engaged about their rude mud ovens baking bread. Several women were employed in turning the entrails inside out, and others in hacking and hewing the reeking limbs for immediate consumption. A little below these was a party of washerwomen. While I was engaged in looking at these different groups, a pretty young female, bareheaded and barefoot, came tripping across the green, to draw water

* Lane, Modern Egyptians, i. 82.

from the river. The immodest costume which Euripides objects to the Spartan women,* was decent, compared with that of this young Arab matron; for the opening in the blue chemise, the only garment which she wore, not only exposed to view the whole of the bosom, but the greater part of the abdomen. At this, however, I soon ceased to be surprised; for the fair sex, in Egypt, provided they can hide their face,—and it is those of the higher order only who attempt to do this—care not what other part of their person they exhibit; observing that it is by the features alone that one individual is distinguished from another, all women being, in other respects, pretty nearly alike. Females of the class immediately above the lowest wear loose calico drawers and a piece of cloth or muslin thrown over the head.† Having filled the jar, our young matron twisted a wisp of straw into a ring, and placed it on her head to hold the vessel, which an Arab, apparently a neighbour, lifted up for her.

Egyptian Oven.

In crossing the ferry, our party occupied three boats, one with a sail, which drew the second after it. The third was rowed across. As soon as we entered the Delta, we observed on every side proofs of its amazing fertility: luxuriant crops of young wheat exquisitely green, exuberant rank grass, plants of gigantic size, beautiful tall tufted reeds, and palms and sycamores of enormous growth. Our road lay along the banks of the Nile, whose muddy waters were now beautifully smooth, and reflected every reed which fringed its margin, and every lazy sail that moved upon its surface. Game abounds prodigiously in these rich plains. Wild ducks, widgeons, snipes, curlews, hoopoes, doves, pigeons, plovers gray and green, partridges, together with hares, and fine large wild boars, are met with in the greatest abundance; but, the hares and boars requiring too much time and preparation, we confined our attention principally to the doves, snipes,

* History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece. † Lane.

and wild-ducks. Twenty-four birds of all sorts were shot in a few hours, as we went along, and served to exercise the ingenuity of our Arab cook in the evening.

On one occasion, during a sporting excursion, we found ourselves on the bank of a stream which it was necessary to cross; on the other side we saw a strapping Arab, and called to him to come and carry us over. Like most of his tribe, he was not troubled with any superfluous clothing, and slipping over his head the fragments of his frock, he was in a moment by our side, in all the majesty of nature. I started first, mounted upon his slippery shoulders, and went along very well until we had got more than half-way over, when I began to observe an irregular tottering movement, and heard behind me the smothered laugh of my companions. I felt my Arab slowly and deliberately lowering his head; my feet touched the water; but with one hand I held my gun above my head, and with the other griped him by the throat. I found myself going, going deeper and deeper, let down with the most studied deliberation, till all at once he gave his neck a sudden toss, jerked his head from under me, and left me standing up to my middle in the stream. I turned round upon him, hardly knowing whether to laugh or to strike him with the butt end of my gun; but one glance at the poor fellow was enough; the sweat stood in large drops on his face, and ran down his naked breast; his knees shook, and he was just ready to drop himself. He had supported me as long as he could; but finding himself failing, and fearing we should both come down together with a splash, at full length, he had lowered me as gently as possible.*

At about an hour's distance from Fouah we passed a sheikh's, or

Sacred Tree.

saint's tomb, erected under the shade of a sycamore of extraordinary

* Stephens, Incidents of Travel.

size and antiquity, in the trunk of which had been driven a number of large nails, intended to support as many votive offerings, consisting of rags of every possible form and colour. In other parts of Africa, where Pagan superstition still prevails, trees themselves sometimes appear to be the objects of worship, and are adorned by the natives with a number of polished bones.* Here, however, the offerings were made to the saint, in whose honour, elsewhere in Egypt, the women bring offerings of flowers of the hennah-tree, and jasmine and roses, and sprigs of myrtle and palm-leaves.†

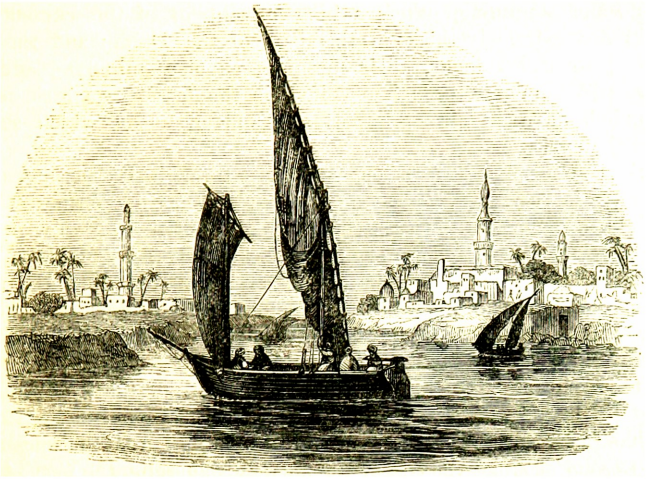
It is not in the villages only that we meet with the tombs of saints; they frequently, in all parts of Egypt, stand in solitary places, and have usually a fountain and small grove adjoining, where the wandering derwish pauses to pray, and the less pious traveller to quench his thirst, or enjoy the cool shade. These buildings generally consist of a large square apartment, surmounted by a dome, in many cases handsomely fluted; and some pious or gloomy man commonly devotes himself to the service of the sheikh, and resides in the tomb, where we always find a mat, a water-jug, and a small chest to receive the donations of the passer-by.

On arriving at Fouah, we proceeded to the caravanserai, which stands in the midst of the bazaar; and, having taken possession of a large apartment, began at once to feather our birds and prepare for supper. The dates and bananas, which constituted our dessert, were of excellent quality, and the finest Nile water was our beverage.

Fouah is a large town, picturesquely situated on the right bank of the Nile, in the midst of vast groves of palms and sycamores, and has a small island in front of it, covered with tall reeds.‡ It contains, moreover, high brick houses, with many windows, now partly in ruins, and possesses several mosques, cupolas, minarets, baths and manufactories.§ The tarboosh manufactory, founded by Mohammed Ali, enjoys some celebrity in Egypt, and is in the hands of Tunisians. It is a large building, well conducted, and is kept neater and cleaner than any other of the Pasha's other factories. The fulling-mill, moved by a wheel turned by oxen, is placed below the surface of the ground, and in it stands the driver who urges on the animals. They make some of the best European wool, partly imported from Spain, which, after being carded in small slips, is spun by women and *netted* into *tarbooshes* by little girls.|| The caps are then taken to the fulling-mill, where they undergo the operation of being cleansed with soap and water of very high temperature, in which they shrink to nearly half their original volume. They are then wrung, put upon blocks to dry, teased and sheared smooth and neat, after which they are dyed to any intensity of shade required, though the prevalent opinion is, that the colour is always inferior to that of the Tunisian caps. They are afterwards furbished up with fine shears, brushes, &c., and being marked and mounted with silk, are put under a press. The cattle used in the mills were all in excellent order; and the working-people of both sexes,

* Barboot, Book i. chap. 10.
† Lane, Modern Egyptians, i. 306.
‡ Duc de Raguse, Voyage, tom. iii. p. 223.
§ Clot-Bey, Aperçu Général de L'Egypte.
|| Cadalvene et Breuvery, tom. i. p. 33.

amounting to two thousand, seemed much better off than the poor devils employed in the cotton-mills. This establishment can manufacture six



Fouah.

thousand caps in a week.* The Pasha used, in time of war, to send in orders for thirty or forty thousand for the army. A finer sort of tarbooshes is likewise turned out here for the Cairo market, where they are made to pass for Tunisian or Fezzani. They formerly produced, for Constantinople, tarbooshes higher in the crown, and thicker, than those worn in Egypt, where two, the one a little smaller than the other, are generally used to protect the head from the sun. But the most curious articles produced at Fouah are certain very delicate caps for the Pasha's harem, of the most beautiful texture, and so small as to fit the nipple of the breast; it being the custom among ladies of rank in the East, to show the bosom through a thin gauze, but to cover the most tender part with red, probably for the sake of effect. There is also a department for the manufacture of *zaboots*, or coarse woollen military cloaks for the troops.

After breakfasting on coffee, eggs, dates, bananas, and most excellent fresh butter, we quitted Fouah about half-past seven o'clock. The morning, though there was a cool breeze stirring, was sunny and beautiful; and the country so richly wooded, so varied in aspect by different kinds of cultivation, so dotted with villages, and flocks and herds, and flights of white ibises, that it might well be called picturesque. Our road constantly lay within a short distance of the Nile, and sometimes close along its edge, where there was just room enough to pass between the water and those high banks of earth, or grassy thickets, which, in many places, border the stream. The river, in this part of its course, is much broader than at

* Duc de Raguse, Voyage, tom. iii. p. 225.

Rosetta, and here and there its channel is divided by small fairy islands, thickly covered with wood. Numerous boats with large triangular sails, and manned with Arabs and Nubians, were sailing rapidly along the shore; some stemming, others taking advantage of the current. The villages are extremely thick in this part of the Delta; and though, in reality, poor and ruinous, their mosques, cupolas, minarets, and white turrets, seen from afar through openings in the forest by which they are surrounded, have an air of importance and grandeur which serves to delight the eye.

In the course of the afternoon we passed through Ed Desoug, or Deir Ibrahim, a large village, possessing a celebrated mosque, formerly, we are told, held in veneration throughout Egypt, and visited twice a year by upwards of two hundred thousand pilgrims. The traveller* to whom we are indebted for this piece of information observes, that the saint interred here performs no greater miracle than suspending, during their pilgrimage to his tomb, the jealousy of all Moslems, since their women, it is said, were allowed extraordinary liberty. Numerous almé, here as elsewhere, perform their pantomimic dances for the amusement of the multitude. At present Ed Desoug seems no longer to be a place of pilgrimage: at least the inhabitants were unable to give us any information on the subject.

Ed Desoug occupies the site of the ancient Naucratis, the port at which all the Greeks resided during their stay in Egypt, which the Pharaohs granted them in the same way as the Chinese emperors formerly did Canton to the Europeans, as their abode. Here, by permission of Amasis, such Greeks as traded with Egypt built altars and erected sacred inclosures in the neighbourhood of the city, though I vainly sought, when on the spot, to discover the slightest trace of them. The nine cities of the Ionians, Dorians, and Æolians, erected, at their common expense, a sacred edifice, which they called Hellenion. The Ionian cities were Chios, Teos, Phocea, and Clazomenæ; the Dorian—Rhodes, Cnidos, Halicarnassos, and Phaselis; the Æolian—Mitylene. The Æginetans raised for their own use a temple to Zeus, the Samians to Hera, the Milesians to Apollo.† At that time, however, Naucratis was the only harbour in Egypt; and as this was pretty generally known, ships making land anywhere else were naturally suspected of being pirates, for which reason the captain was required to swear that he had come thither involuntarily. This done, he had to steer for the Canopic mouth of the Nile; or, if the weather were contrary, his cargo was conveyed round the Delta in barides to Naucratis, which the historian understood to be done for the benefit of the foreign settlers; so greatly, says he, was Naucratis honoured. At this time, one of the principal articles exported into Egypt by the Greeks would appear to have been wine, since all the drink in the country was foreign, the vine not having been as yet introduced.‡

From Ed Desoug we proceeded to Sa el Haggar, or "Sa of the Stones," near which is supposed to have stood Sais, once the capital of Lower Egypt. Long before we reached the place, vast mounds of rubbish were seen rising behind the village; and close to the road stood a small rocky

* Denon, Voyage, p. 54. † Herodotus, ii. 178.

‡ History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece, vol. iii. p. 259.

eminence, in the face of which were two or three low openings, like the entrance to so many caverns. Trusting to the assurances which were given us, that no antiquities whatever existed in this place, we made no stay at Sa el Haggar; but, although there seems to be no reason to doubt the accuracy of these assertions, I still regret that I did not devote at least one day to the city of Neith, where stood of old the mysterious statue of Nature, with the inscription—"*I am all that has been, is, or shall be; and no mortal hath ever drawn aside my veil.*" Apries, who was conquered at Momemphis by Amasis, had here a magnificent palace; and his successor, not to be outdone by him in taste or splendour, is said to have constructed in this city propylæa so vast, and built with stones of so prodigious a magnitude, that they surpassed in grandeur everything of the kind which had been before seen.* But with Herodotus such expressions are not uncommon: he makes use of much the same phrases in speaking of the Labyrinth which the colleagues of Psammetichus erected in the Arsinoïtic Nome; and modern travellers, fond of dealing in the marvellous, repeat the hackneyed tale one after another.

Next day, having crossed the canal of El Feresak, and passed through the village of Beis, we arrived about noon at Kafr Diami, where we dined in the shade of a beautiful orange and citron grove. The ground was covered with fine green turf, and the trees were filled with doves and pigeons. Directly opposite this village, on the other side of the canal, we observed a great number of men employed in raising an embankment. Among these poor people there appears to exist no idea of modesty or decorum; for the greater number of the men were quite naked, notwithstanding that a crowd of women and children—probably their wives, mothers, and daughters—were assembled close by, looking on. The men, in this part of the country, have generally athletic forms, brown complexions, and fine features; and many of the women are good-looking, if not handsome, and have very graceful figures. Boys always go naked to the age of puberty; the girls have commonly a few rags to cover them.

The *Sant*, or mimosa tree, whose thin shade is compared by the Arabs to a false friend, who deserts you when most needed, is extremely common, and in some places literally embowers the road, or rather perhaps track, occasionally leading over ploughed fields, intersected with sloughs and ditches. The canals, numerous in this part of the Delta, are generally traversedin ferry-boats; but we this morning found a fine stone bridge thrown over one of the principal branches of the canal of Harinen. This is one of the useful works of the Pasha. A few good roads and bridges would do more than a hundred cotton-mills towards ameliorating the condition of the people—the first step towards genuine civilisation: for though the Nile forms a vast and splendid highway from one end of Egypt to the other, ordinary roads are still wanting, more especially in Lower Egypt. Several children who passed us in the afternoon, mounted astride on buffaloes, possessed extremely fair complexions, and one, that particularly attracted my attention, had long light hair, and all the engaging features of a European child. These buffaloes differ

* Euterpe, cap. 175.

remarkably from those of India, in not having the hump upon the back. They are large awkward animals, with horns turned back flat upon the head, and, like their brethren of Asia, love to roll in the mud, and lie in the water during hot weather, with their noses only appearing above the surface.

The buffalo does not appear to be indigenous in Egypt; * for it is never represented on ancient monuments, nor found in the mummy state. It is said that it was introduced after the conquest of the Arabs. The climate and soil of the country agree admirably with this animal. The breed is, in fact, multiplied with the greatest facility, and has acquired a very fine size. The Egyptian buffaloes have little hair; the colour of their skin is black or iron-gray. They live so much in the water that they might almost be called amphibious. Though fierce in aspect, they are in reality extremely gentle, and do not possess the suspicious ferocity of the buffalo of Europe, and particularly of Romagna. The females yield on an average from seven to eight quarts of excellent milk a-day. The Arabs have not as yet rendered the prodigious strength of the buffalo useful, by employing it in domestic labour. Its flesh is very coarse, and is eaten only by the humbler classes.

Wilkinson observes, that he has met in the ancient sculptures with no representation of the buffalo; though, from its being now so common in the country, and indigenous in Abyssinia, he infers that it was not unknown to the ancient Egyptians. The Indian, or humped ox, was common in former times, and is abundant in Upper Ethiopia, though no longer a native of Egypt. Like other cattle, it was used for sacrifice as well as for the table; and large herds were kept in the farms of the wealthy Egyptians, by whom the meat, particularly the hump on the shoulder, was doubtless esteemed as a dainty. It is sometimes represented, decked with flowers and garlands, on its way to the altar; but there is no appearance of its having been emblematic of any deity, or of having held a post among the sacred animals of the country. †

Some time before arriving at our halting-place, I had separated from the rest of the company, and was riding on alone. One of our Arabs, who understood a little of that strange kind of Italian spoken at Alexandria, immediately deserted the sumpter animals, and stuck close to my skirts. I desired him to leave me and attend to his charge; but, as he did not appear to understand me, I repeated the same thing twice or three times; and at length became rather angry. He then showed me his stick, and, pointing across the field to several fellahs, who were at work, replied: "I will not leave you here alone. Those Arabs are bad men; but they will not touch you while I am by. When the other gentlemen come up, I will attend to the baggage." I told him I wore pistols. "No matter," said he, "your pistols are but two, and the Arabs are a thousand." There were at most thirty persons within sight, but this is their manner of speaking. "Very well, Mohammed," I replied, "you may stay;" and he accordingly trotted behind me as long as he thought proper.

* Clot-Bey, Aperçu Général de l'Egypte, t. i. p. 175.
† Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, vol. v. p. 199.

We arrived about nightfall at Tookh-el-Nassera, where we were lodged in the house of the Sheikh of the village. The room assigned to us was in the upper part of the building, and approached by a narrow flight of steps on the outside, as is the fashion in Switzerland. While our people were preparing supper, which they did in the open air, we witnessed a proof of that degeneracy of manners among the Moslems, which unhappily prevails, more or less, throughout the East. The Sheikh, accompanied by several persons, came in the course of the evening to pay us a visit, from hospitable motives, as we at first supposed. Our agreeable delusion was soon dispelled; he had brought some papers in his hands, which, as he had no lamp at home, he requested permission to read by our candle. Of course, we were too happy to be able to oblige him. He therefore spelled over the documents, slowly and deliberately; and from the gravity of his visage, one might have conjectured that they related to matters of importance. Probably, however, he had perused them a dozen times before. At any rate, their contents no way disturbed his equanimity; but, interrupting himself in the midst of his task, he, with a most knowing and waggish look, requested we would favour him and his friends with a little wine. For the best of all reasons, we were compelled to appear inhospitable in his eyes. We assured him that it was not, while travelling, our practice to drink wine, especially in Egypt, where the water of the Nile was so excellent. He was incredulous, and grinned, and joked, and looked insinuating, fully persuaded that he should overcome our obduracy at last. When the wine, however, appeared not to be forthcoming, he whispered something about brandy. One of my companions, full of mischief, and fond of playing tricks upon the Arabs, proposed that we should dose them with *Eau de Cologne;* but this having been overruled, our guests departed, disgusted by what they, no doubt, regarded as a proof of Frankish meanness.

This scene over, I wrapped myself in my *burnoose*, and went forth to observe the appearance of an Arab village by night. The lanes were dark and narrow, and the dogs, barking as I passed, brought out many an old woman to the door. The majority, indeed, had retired to rest; but in several cottages, and in one large building, I heard the sound of the spinning-wheel, which, as I was unluckily compelled to observe, continued at work all night. Tookh being a walled village, there stood at every gate a sentinel keeping watch as in a besieged city—a proof of the insecurity in which the peasantry pass their lives. Returning, I retired to bed with the rest, one of whom had a fever, another the dysentery. Few slept much, and myself not at all; for the fleas, bugs, musquitoes, and other vermin, literally swarmed, and the rats and mice, rummaging in the baskets of provisions, biting each other, squeaking, creeping down the walls, leaping upon our feet or breasts, effectually put sleep to flight. I might have very properly exclaimed with Cowley—

> "The halcyon sleep will never build his nest
> In any stormy breast.
> 'Tis not enough that he does find
> Clouds and darkness in their mind,
> Darkness but half his work will do;
> 'Tis not enough; he must find quiet too."

There being every possible inducement to early rising, we were up long before four o'clock; and, having taken coffee, and saddled and bridled our beasts, were prepared to start with the dawn. Sooner than this we could not, as our *asinarii* were unacquainted with the tracks which, the waters of the inundation not having yet retired, were exceedingly circuitous and intricate; but as soon as the light began to appear in the east, we took our leave of the musquitoes and rats of Tookh-el-Nassera. It was a fine serene morning; the skylarks were already busy among the gray clouds; the peasants afield; and I watched with unusual interest the unfolding of the landscape, as its rich and varied features came forth one after another. A vast canal, which we crossed about six o'clock, supplied with its winding course and reedy banks the place of a river, and the whole face of the country, green and level as a meadow, was beautifully ornamented with small tufted groves of the mimosa tree, intermingled with palms and sycamores.

After passing through two or three smaller villages, we arrived, about half-past ten o'clock, at *Shibin-el-Kom*, a place of some consideration, where the Pasha has erected an extensive factory. Here we entered into a large garden, and breakfasted under the shade of orange and citron-trees. While the coffee was boiling, we were enlivened by what, in popular phraseology, may be termed a row between two or three men, and a woman who appeared to be the proprietor's wife. Upon promise of a small reward, she had permitted us to enter the garden, which the husband on arriving thought proper to take amiss, and began to pour forth a torrent of abuse upon his helpmate. She returned his vituperation with interest; and, in the end, though he was backed by two of his workmen, whose tongues were to the full as loud as his own, the matron, who from time to time pointed at us with her finger, clearly gained the victory, and sent them all away grumbling to their work. Another young female, with a child in her arms, who seemed to have entered the garden in order to gaze at us, was tattooed in an extraordinary manner, having several lines of small figures running across the chin, a row of blue stars and flowers on the inside of the arm, and round the wrists a very curious imitation of bracelets. This practice prevails more or less among all Arab women, especially of the humbler classes, whose chins are generally thus disfigured; in addition to which, some imprint the form of a small flower on the left breast, or three small circles in the space between the breasts, others on the backs of the hands and feet; but I have nowhere observed a person so ingeniously

Tattooed Female.

ornamented as this young woman. The punctures, as among the South Sea Islanders, are made with the points of needles, generally seven tied together. Some smoke-black of wood or oil, mixed with milk from a woman's breast, is then rubbed in, and in about a week, before the skin is quite healed, a paste of the pounded fresh leaves of white beet or clover is applied, and gives a blue or greenish colour to the marks. It is generally performed at the age of about five or six years, and by gipsy women. The term applied to it is duk. Most of the females of the higher parts of Upper Egypt, who are of a very dark complexion, tattoo their lips instead of the parts above mentioned; thus converting their natural colour into a dull blueish hue, which to the eye of a stranger is extremely displeasing.*

It may be added, that the Coptic women generally, among the tattooed ornaments of their breasts, introduce the figure of a cross. The process is highly dangerous; fevers almost invariably ensue, which sometimes terminate fatally.

A little to the north of Shibin-el-Kom, the canal of Tanta joins that of Harinen. We were here tempted to turn aside from our direct track to visit Tanta, a city celebrated throughout the East for the saints which reside in it, and the number of pilgrims by which it is annually frequented. I once met in the Libyan Desert a holy man, accompanied by two servants, who after having visited the shrine of Sheik-el-Bedawy, at Tanta, was proceeding towards the banks of the White River to converse with a celebrated saint, who resided there. Pilgrims are constantly passing to and fro between the several holy places of the Mohammedan world; and wherever there is a remarkable shrine numbers of devout personages, who gradually acquire the reputation of saints, are sure to settle near it, and attract visitors. Tanta in this respect is to Egypt what Haridwara is to Hindústân, and Mecca to Arabia—the most distinguished place of pilgrimage, and the most remarkable resort of merchants, traders, and pleasure-seekers, from all parts of the world. We were of course anxious to behold the fair, and the great variety of amusements by which it is enlivened. It happened, however, that we were disappointed. We arrived "the day after the fair," notwithstanding which our curiosity was not altogether disappointed. The town occupies a little ridge running north and south: to the east is seen a kind of hill, or rather, huge heap of rubbish. We passed through two gates and two walls of inclosure in entering. The houses are built of unburnt brick; and the streets are dirty and narrow. Shops occur everywhere. The fair, although over, had bequeathed for a while to the city an animated appearance.

We visited a great many okellas, where are laid up all kinds of merchandise; one of these okellas contained black slaves. Tanta possesses many bazaars, one devoted to silks, another to cloths and stuffs, another to corn, another to agricultural instruments. We went to the great Mosque, the most remarkable building in the town; the edifice occupies a considerable raised space in the centre of the city; the two minarets of white stone may be seen afar off: they have two galleries, and are sur-

* Lane, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, vol. i. p. 46; vol. ii. p. 310.

mounted by a crescent with balls of bronze. The dome of the mosque is covered with lead; the walls of the sanctuary are marble; under the dome stands the tomb of Sidi-Ahmet Bedawy. An iron railing surrounds the sarcophagus, which is covered over with silk. Here and there were fine columns, removed no doubt from some temple of Isis; around the sacred inclosure we were shown a reservoir for ablutions, the dwellings of the Imams who officiate in the mosque, a bake-house, a kitchen where food for the poor is prepared, and, not far from the temple, a sort of fish-pond, in which, every evening, the infirm and the sick come to bathe, in hopes of obtaining a miraculous cure. The mosque, at all hours of the day, and especially at the hour of prayer, is filled with a great multitude of the faithful—women and men mingled; conversation is carried on aloud, the pipe is smoked, articles of female dress and children's toys are sold.

The Sheikh Bedawy lived in the thirteenth century, and established himself at Tanta about the time when St. Louis landed in Egypt. As he died with a great reputation for sanctity, a tomb and a chapel were in the first instance raised in his honour. In the next century, the Sultan Malek-el-Nar built him a mosque, and to this a great number of Mussulmans were attracted by devotion; commerce followed in the track of the pilgrims, and from the earliest times there was held at Tanta an annual fair, whither flocked merchants from India, Syria, Persia, Asia Minor, and all parts of Africa. The famous Ali Bey rebuilt the Mosque of Sheikh Bedawy; at the same time many great okellas were erected in the city of Tanta.

The mosque, which was richly endowed, fed numbers of poor people; and the city afforded to travellers and merchants all kinds of amusements and merchandise. The influx of strangers, therefore, increased every year, and amounted in times of peace to as many as one hundred and fifty thousand. The mosque of Tanta has now been deprived of its revenues, the Pasha of Egypt at present defraying all the expenses of the establishment. Every year he sends the red silken cloth which covers the holy man's sarcophagus; and he pays all who officiate in the mosque, or are employed about it. Their number is considerable. Poor pilgrims are fed by the charity of the faithful; the rich kill buffaloes, oxen, and sheep, for the mosque; the fellahs bring fowls, pigeons, ducks, geese, rice, onions, cabbages, and other vegetables. All these offerings of devotion are cast into great caldrons, and distributed every day to the multitude, who offer thanks to the patron of the place.

Women upon whom nature has inflicted the curse of barrenness, come to ask a remedy from the Sheikh Bedawy. This singular species of devotion has always brought great crowds to Tanta, and profligacy has not failed to follow in the train of superstition. The almé of Cairo, of Upper Egypt, of the Delta, and the shores of the Nile, flock to this place during the first half of April. In their train come mountebanks, singers, musicians, whose task it is to enliven the multitude; men and women appear in the mosque, repeat a prayer before the tomb of the saint, then spread themselves through the city and in the coffee-houses that cover the plain. Everywhere are pitched tents, which soon become the abode of amusement and

pleasure; on all sides shows and dances are seen; and the sound of the tambourine is heard, with the noise of castanets, and voices that call to the passers-by from beneath a screen of verdure, or a tent of reeds: "Talé! talé!"—"Come, come!"

After having visited the city, still filled with merchants, and the environs, where thousands of stalls and tents remained standing, we repaired to the hill before mentioned, which forms so conspicuous an object. It is an enormous collection of rubbish and unburnt bricks, and presents in some places a precipitous face. Certain travellers have considered that this mound marks the site of an ancient city, the name of which is not known. It has been long the cemetery of Tanta, and is covered with monumental stones; some surmounted by a turban, others bearing inscriptions of sentences from the Koran. Before many tombs lighted lamps were placed. Groups of women and children were praying in the place, and their pious abstraction formed a singular contrast with the sound of tambourines with which the plain was filled. In descending the hill on the north side, we came to the cattle-bazaar, where, during the fair, a prodigious quantity of sheep, camels, buffaloes, and oxen, had been offered for sale. Horses, also, of the Delta breed, are brought thither; and it is to this market that the butchers of Cairo, and even Rosetta and Alexandria, repair to obtain their cattle.*

The following adventure was related to us at Tanta:—A European merchant, born in Egypt, happening to be at the fair some years back, dressed in the Oriental style, was arrested by the police on some pretext or other, and imagined that his character of Frank gave him a right to strike the chief of the guard. Being led before the Nazir, he could not, for want of a passport, prove his European origin, which was not at all confirmed by the facility with which he spoke the language of the country. In spite of his protestations, accordingly he received one hundred strokes with the koorbash on his back. On his return to Alexandria, he laid his complaint before his consul; in consequence of whose energetic remonstrances the Nazir was condemned to receive the same number of blows he had administered. But this individual, high in credit with the Viceroy, obtained permission to send his khaznadar, or treasurer, in his stead. This officer, therefore, thus made the representative of the Nazir, received the hundred strokes with the koorbash in presence of the consul and the beaten merchant, who actually consented to this substitution!†

For some time after leaving Shibin-el-Kom, we proceeded along the stream formed by the junction of the canals of Tanta and Harinen, which, though an artificial cut, possesses all the beauty of a natural river, its winding banks being richly adorned with plantations of orange and lemon-trees, whose golden fruit, now ripe, and clustering thick among the deep-green foliage, glowed in the sun. The earth in many places was beautifully carpeted with tender green corn; and groves of sant, tamarisks, acacias, and sycamores, exhibiting all shades of verdure, formed a remarkable contrast with the fields of ripe yellow grain, which clothed every broad glade and opening

* Michaud et Poujoulat. † Cadalvène et Breuvery.

vista with an air of opulence and abundance. Indeed, the land had here all the characteristics of the finest park scenery, and at one particular bend of the river greatly resembled the landscape on the Thames below Richmond. Our track lay almost constantly along the banks of the great canals, so that we probably saw the most fertile part of the country; but as small arms or branches from the main streams ramificate, like veins, in every direction, there can nowhere, I imagine, be any lack of rich corn-fields or noble pasturage. Yet in the midst of this magnificent plain, lying between the canal of Menouf and the Damietta branch of the Nile, fertile even to rankness, the poorest villages perhaps in Egypt are found. The Nile overflows, and the sun ripens in vain. Misgovernment more than counterbalances the bounty of nature, and leaves the wretched peasant pining with want in the midst of luxuriant harvests and well-filled granaries.

The ruined cities which attract the traveller into Egypt, their temples and tombs, the enduring monuments of its former greatness, do not yet present themselves. The modern villages are all built of mud or of unburnt bricks, and sometimes, at a distance, being surrounded by palm-trees, make a pleasing appearance; but this vanishes the moment you approach them. The houses, or rather huts, are so low that a man can seldom stand up in them, with a hole in front like the door of an oven, into which the miserable Arab crawls, more like a beast than a being made to walk in God's image. The same spectacle of misery and wretchedness, of poverty, famine, and nakedness, which I had seen in the suburbs of Alexandria, continued to meet me at every village on the Nile, and soon suggested the interesting consideration, whether all this came from country and climate, from the character of the people, or from the government of the great reformer. At one place, I saw on the banks of the river forty or fifty men chained together, with iron bands around their wrists, and iron collars around their necks. Yesterday they were peaceful Fellahs, cultivators of the soil, earning their scanty bread by hard and toilsome labour, but eating it at home in peace. Another day, and the stillness of their life is for ever broken; chased, run down, and caught, torn from their homes, from the sacred threshold of the mosque, the sword and musket succeed the implements of their quiet profession; they are carried away to fight battles in a cause which does not concern them, and in which, if they conquer, they can never gain.*

On arriving at Bershaum, we found that the *Sheikh el Beled*, who had several villages under his government, was absent, and not expected to return that night; in consequence of which we for some time inquired in vain for a lodging, and began to think of passing the night in the street; but at length some good-natured Arab consented to accommodate us with a cow-house, and another small chamber capable of containing two beds.

The inhabitants of the village crowded round us with all sorts of things for sale, and beset us so closely that we were obliged to station our people round to keep them off in some degree. As many of them had the same kind of goods, we had often some difficulty in choosing the person with

* Stephens, Incidents of Travel.

whom we would deal; for, though the competition was so great, they never offered to undersell each other, but adhered with plaguy unanimity all of them to one price. At last our friend, who usually took charge of the commissariat department, got over the difficulty with his accustomed cleverness, by making no purchase except from the youngest and prettiest women, whereat the old ones set up a tremendous screeching, and there was such a comical squabbling and fighting, that we were compelled, by dint of laughter, to put an end to the market. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the almost frantic eagerness with which the women ran up with their heavy burthens, and strove, with all sorts of coaxing and wheedling, to obtain custom. One of them, for instance, would have a basket of butter and eggs on her head, some fowls in one hand, and a pitcher of milk in the other, and all this they balanced so adroitly, that in spite of the pushing and driving, nothing was spilt or broken. Each woman had generally one or two dirty little brats holding fast by her blue shift, which they never ventured to let go from fear of the Franks. The poor little things fared, therefore, very roughly in the confusion; many a time they were laid sprawling, and their shrill wailings mingled harmoniously with the screeching of the women. At last we had completed our necessary purchases; we did not require much, for it was the last day we should have to cook our own pillaus and fowls. We withdrew into the shed to get rid of the throng, with which, for many reasons, we were not desirous of coming in close contact.*

Egyptian Woman.

The floor of the cow-house, where we dined, was thickly strewed with dhoura straw; and our lantern, shaken to pieces by the jolting of the road, placed upon the earthen vessel which contained our butter, was often upset among the straw, to the no small danger of the whole tenement. However, our Arab cook, accustomed to scanty conveniences, served up an

* Hackländer, Daguerreotypen, u. s. w.

excellent supper, consisting of doves, snipes, quails, &c., stewed in onions; and our long day's journey had provided us with an appetite.

Next morning, being desirous of reaching Cairo before sunset, we set out soon after dawn, through a thick white fog, like those which during the preceding winter I had seen covering the great plains of Burgundy. Though our course on quitting Bershaum lay close along the Damietta branch of the Nile, we could at first discover nothing beyond the mere edge of the stream; but as the fog cleared up a little, and suffered us to discover the opposite bank, this arm of the river expanded before us in all its magnificence. By degrees, as the sun gained force, a light breeze sprang up, and began to dissipate the vapour, which was driven along like sleet, leaving the whole earth drenched as after a heavy shower. Every object beheld through this mist appeared greatly magnified; a man riding an ass seemed to be mounted on a camel, and a little boy looked like a man. The heat of the sun now became very powerful; every person felt oppressed, and our animals moved along faintly and languidly—the effect of humidity; for in Upper Egypt and Nubia, where the heat is far greater, no such languor is experienced.

At Shubr-es-Shawieh we crossed the Nile, and entered what is generally called the Land of Goshen, the residence of the Beni Israël, once fertile and flourishing, but now more than half deserted, and rapidly assimilating in character and features to the desert. At Kelioub, the capital of this district, our party halted to breakfast. There, beneath a spreading sycamore, we found a kind of hedge coffee-house, the landlord having kindled a fire between two piles of loose bricks, and spread his mat under the shelter of a mud wall. We took up our position on the other side of the tree, and while some proceeded to the village in search of dates, eggs, milk, and butter, the remainder undertook to boil rice and prepare coffee. The Pasha's monopoly having rendered the real Mokha exceedingly scarce and dear, the poor Arabs have long been fain to content themselves with a very inferior American substitute, which, in order to render it more palatable, they sometimes flavour with cloves or cardamom seed. Occasionally they impart a peculiar flavour to the coffee, by fumigating their cups with the smoke of mastic; "and the wealthy," observes Lane, "sometimes impregnate the coffee with the delicious fragrance of ambergris." * But the beverage which the man of Goshen distributed to the wayfarers in Kelioub, was the clove mixture above mentioned. This being exceedingly hot to the palate, was much relished by the natives. My companions, who ventured on a single cup, thought it execrable, though to me it seemed not much amiss. When our meal was ready, we sat down and ate it under the tree; and a poor old beggar, who had previously established himself there, and whom we permitted to share with us, called down the blessings of Allah on our unbelieving heads. Charity covereth a multitude of sins. He was probably one of those derwishes, who travel about the country from village to village, appealing to the charity of the people in the name of God "the

* Modern Egyptians, vol. i. p. 169.

Compassionate, the Merciful," and who, to the honour of the Egyptians be it spoken, are never allowed to want. Frequently these men are treated and spoken of as impostors, and some of the fraternity are doubtless no better. In many instances they go about mounted on horseback, and accompanied by two or three men carrying flags or beating drums, for the purpose, I suppose, of rousing in their countrymen the sleeping spirit of charity.

It was at Kelioub that I for the first time tasted the conserve of dates, so well known in the East, made in the latter end of autumn, when the fruit is perfectly ripe, by taking out the stones, and then pressing them in thick masses together. This conserve will keep all the year, and is extremely well tasted; but, in some cases, when no care has been taken to cleanse the fruit, a number of sandy particles are found grating under the teeth. Near the sycamore-tree was a large pond of water, left by the inundation, which served as fountain, washing-place, and horse-pond to the whole village.

Kelioub, where there are several factories and cotton mills, is very much frequented on account of the cattle-market held there every week. After a long walk through its dark and narrow streets, we went to see the Memour, who received us in the most friendly manner. Whilst he was giving us some information about the province under his government, four men were brought before him accused of murder. These unhappy beings were immediately sent to the kihaya, or secretary, to be interrogated. He reported in a quarter of an hour, that from the confusion exhibited in their answers, he doubted not that they were the assassins of the Effendi killed some days before.

"Good; inquire of the authorities at Cairo, by means of the telegraph, what I am to do with them."

The answer was not long waited for—

"Since their guilt is evident," was the message of the chief of the council, "let them be executed."

It was market day. Besides, as we were bound for Cairo, the Memour was glad that we should be able to give a good account of the way in which he administered justice in his province. Orders were consequently given to hang these unfortunate men, who in all probability were innocent, that very day. We were present at the execution.

The four prisoners were taken out of a kind of warehouse, where they had been confined for want of a prison, and led to a little open place near the Memour's house. The merchants there assembled remained squatting by the side of their goods, and saw with the most perfect indifference these wretched men pass by under a guard of six soldiers and a sergeant. Every one continued to attend quietly to his own affairs; and had it not been for the cries of the women and children who followed to the place of execution their fathers, their husbands, their only friends, one might have thought that nothing was to happen out of the established order of every-day life.

Four gibbets had been erected at the four corners of the place. The soldiers asked the neighbours for some cords; but they were luxuries

that nobody possessed. The sergeant therefore went and brought some twine, which the soldiers instantly set about plaiting. Some standers-by obligingly offered their assistance to perform this operation, whilst the condemned looked on with tranquillity, without thinking of attempting to escape, which would have been easy enough, their hands only being carelessly tied behind their backs, and nobody paying any particular attention to them.

The fatal moment at length arrived. The younger was chosen to be hanged first.

"Blockhead! that is not the way to go about it," said one of the soldiers to his companion, who was about to fasten the cord in the first instance round the neck of the victim; "better tie it first to the gibbet."

Upon this he ordered one of the spectators to bring him a ladder, and made the necessary preparation to despatch the condemned man, who, being taken round the waist by another soldier, was raised without offering the slightest resistance, and soon expired, after having protested his innocence. Three of these unhappy men had already ceased to exist; the last remaining was an old man, with a white beard, surrounded by his wife and children, and who, in answer to their sobs and shrieks, contented himself with repeating that he was innocent.

"Ah!" said the sergeant to one of his soldiers, "if you were to go to the Memour, and ask the life of this poor old man, he might, perhaps, spare it—go!"

The soldier, carelessly shouldering his gun, repaired slowly to the governor to fulfil his mission. In the meantime the old man tranquilly conversed with his family. A few minutes only had passed before the soldier reappeared; at sight of him a gleam of hope and joy brightened the faces of the women; but soon their cries and sobs were redoubled; the Memour had refused a pardon.

"'Tis a pity," said the sergeant; "this old man seems an honest fellow; but his last hour is come."

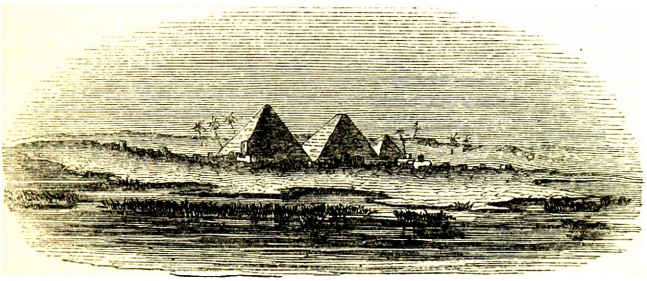
Whilst pronouncing these words he himself passed the cord round the neck of the condemned, who, after having embraced with wonderful resignation his wife and children, simply exclaimed, "God is great!"

The small number of persons whom curiosity had drawn to witness this sad spectacle, now slowly dispersed among the neighbouring coffee-shops; and very soon nothing was to be heard but the sound of musical instruments, and the song of the almé.*

Remounting our beasts we pushed on towards Cairo. The slight haze, which had all the morning obstructed our view, now cleared away, and we discovered, on the edge of the Libyan desert, the apex of the Pyramids. Upon this I felt that I was in Egypt. But, notwithstanding the ideas, manifold and mysterious as they are, which history has invincibly connected, in our mind, with these prodigious structures, they by no means, when first beheld from afar, excite those powerful emotions of astonishment and admiration to which the sublimity of nature gives birth. On the

* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

contrary, when beginning to loom upon you across the desert, through openings in the palm forests, they appear little better than large brick-kilns. In fact, you only see a small portion of their upper part. But when you consider that you are still at the distance of a long day's journey; that these fair proportions are apparently curtailed by the mere rotundity of the globe; that they have withstood the wear and tear of three thousand years; and that, if left entirely to the action of the elements, they will probably equal the world itself in duration, your imagination begins to take fire, and acquires, by degrees, a just conception of the sublime design of the architect. As we rode along, the eye, thus aided by the imagination, which alone vivifies and endues this sublunary scene with beauty, began to be familiarised with them, to measure them more accurately, and to transmit to the mind a juster idea of their magnitude and grandeur. Every other object, from this time, was forgotten. They occupied and filled the whole



General view of the Pyramids.

mind; and as we drew nearer and nearer, they seemed to lift themselves up, like giants, far above everything around—the monuments and the tombs of an extinct people, whose bones and ashes, gathered together, might all have been hidden within the dimensions of those prodigious edifices. Two only of the Pyramids are at first visible; and it is some time before that of Mycerinus appears. As you advance, those of Cheops and Cephrenes seem to join at the base: you behold two points apparently rising from one foundation, and, shortly afterwards, the former entirely masks the latter, and they appear to be reduced to one.

Arriving at Shoubra, we passed through the grounds of the Pasha's palace, and entered that grand avenue which leads all the way from thence to Cairo. The road, raised several feet above the surrounding country, to keep up the communication with the city during the inundation,* is here at least a hundred feet in breadth, and bordered on either side by a row of noble sycamores, acacias, mimosas, and tamarisks, the successors of those mulberries which Mohammed Ali had at one swoop cut down,† and whose branches, meeting above in many places, form a verdant arch, at all times impervious to the rays of the sun. The views on both sides are magnificent.

* Wilde, Narrative, i. 330.

† Mrs. Lushington, Narrative, p. 122.

Close at hand, on the right, is the Nile, with its whole surface trembling and glittering in the sun; numerous small barks, with lateen sails, moving up and down the stream; and, beyond these, a richly cultivated country backed by the desert. On the left, between the stems of the trees, we could perceive Cairo itself, with its walls, and minarets, and domes, and towers, basking in the sun, apparently at the very foot of the Porphyry mountains, which, unlike all others, appear red at a distance, even when their tops seem to blend with the sky. When the Pasha is at Shoubra "the couriers passing and repassing upon their dromedaries, at a rapid pace, to the royal residence, and the number of persons who throng this avenue, give spirit and animation to the scene."*

Beheld from afar, Cairo truly appears worthy to be the metropolis of Egypt; skirted by groves and gardens, its light, airy structures seem to be based upon a mass of verdure; long lines of buildings, white, glittering, and infinitely varied in form, rise behind each other; and the palace and citadel, cresting a steep projection of the Mokattam ridge, conduct the eye to that vast rocky barrier which protects the Victorious† city from the blasts of the desert. At the termination of the grand avenue, where the road from Boolak unites with that of Shoubra, immense mounds of rubbish, with the appearance of natural eminences, obstruct the view of the Nile; but, on the left, the eye is still refreshed by the sight of numerous gardens of banana, lemon, orange and citron-trees, laden with ripe fruit, and scattering through the air a faint but delicious perfume. The Alexandrians had taught me to expect a very different prospect. The entrance from Shoubra to the capital, they said, was mean, naked, insignificant; but I found it otherwise. In fact, the near view of the city from this side was more imposing than the distant one. Lofty garden walls, over which long regular rows of palm-trees were waving their elegant pendulous branches; houses, in many cases new, spacious, and furnished with glass windows, or very neat lattice-work, conducted us to the place Esbekeyah, an immense square, containing large sheets of water, fields of green corn, and groves of towering sycamores; and traversed by a fine, broad gravel walk, over which crowds of people were passing to and fro, some on foot, others on horses, or asses, or camels, or dromedaries, in every variety of costume, from the meanest to the most gorgeous. Two sides of this immense square, equal in dimensions to the Champ de Mars at Paris, or upwards of sixty acres, are surrounded by palaces, one of which, during the French expedition, was occupied by Napoleon; on the other sides are ranges of lofty antique structures, which, though considerably dilapidated, have still a striking Oriental air, resembling, in some respects, the architectural palaces of Prout and Canaletti. In one of the gardens extending behind this square General Kleber was assassinated by a janisary. During the month of September, when the inundation of the Nile attains its greatest height, the whole area of this square was formerly filled with water many feet deep, on which floated numerous barks, illuminated during the night. Having crossed this

* Wilde, Narrative, i. 330.

† Masr el Kahira, or "the Victorious," the Oriental name of Cairo.

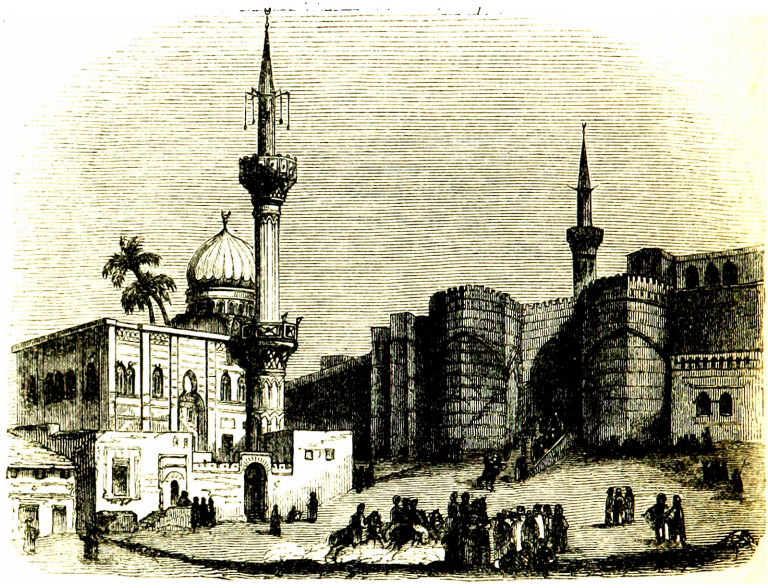
open space, the principal in all Cairo, we plunged into the narrow, tortuous streets leading to the Frank quarter, through so motley a crowd as no other city, perhaps, in the world could have supplied:—Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Copts, Turks, Negroes, Germans, Poles, Italians, French, English, Greeks, —all in their national dresses,—red, blue, yellow, green, gray, black, white; —in short, all the colours of the rainbow.

Clot-Bey, a man extremely familiar with the scene, presents us with the following animated picture:—"The movement of the population of Cairo commences at six o'clock in the morning; it is discontinued, during the heat of the day, from twelve to three o'clock. All travellers who have written on Egypt, speak of the picturesque scene exhibited in the streets, the bazaars, and the squares, by the motley crowd which fills them. All speak of the numerous contrasts it presents; the wealthy man in his splendid and gold-covered garments by the side of the beggar in his rags; the man of business passing rapidly before the indolent santon who receives, as he lies carelessly stretched on the ground, the touches of the women whose superstition teaches them to expect thus to obtain their cure or some other miraculous favour; and then all those men of different nations, religions, and sects, distinguished from each other by their physical characteristics and peculiar costumes; and those ladies with everything but their eyes concealed by the voluminous folds of their dresses, gliding hither and thither like phantoms; and here, moreover, threading the crowd, the ass goaded on by his young and petulant driver, there the grave and slow camel, then again the horse of the noble magnificently caparisoned and the man of law's mule moving along with a gentle and measured pace; in fine, those numerous mountebanks who amuse the passers-by, those story-tellers, who, in the coffee-shops, feed the contemplative spirit of the indolent smoker. To the peculiarities of its population add the strange physiognomy which is bestowed on Cairo by its terraced houses, its serpentine streets, the innumerable minarets which rise on every side, and you will obtain a conception of a city the like of which nowhere else exists, a city stamped with a genuine Arab impress, a true city of the Arabian Nights."

CHAPTER IX.

Description of the City and Houses of Cairo.

The city of Cairo, or, as the natives denominate it, Masr-el-Kahirah, situate in latitude 30° 2′ 21″ N., and longitude 28° 58′ 30″ E., is about nine



Mahmoudiyeh Mosque, and City Gate, Cairo.

miles in circumference, and contains a population which has been variously estimated at from two hundred to three hundred thousand.* Truth, however, may lie between: it is probably two hundred and fifty thousand, rather less than more. The descriptions of this truly Oriental capital which have been given by travellers are extremely numerous, but all of them perhaps in some respects imperfect. My picture will doubtless be so also, my object being rather to dwell on its prominent and characteristic features than to enter into those minute details which an attempt at completeness would involve.

Cairo was formerly surrounded by a wall, strengthened and adorned by towers, and pierced by several magnificent gates, (sixty-nine, great and small, according to some accounts,) several of which still remain in all their beauty. In many places, however, the fortifications have crumbled into dust, and, suburbs projecting themselves beyond the old circumference,

* Jomard, Description du Caire.

that which was meant as a defence has now dwindled into a mere ornament. The interior is divided into fifty-four quarters, or systems of buildings, so contrived that each has but one issue by which it communicates with the neighbouring sections of the city. This outlet is closed at night by massive wooden doors, with huge locks and bolts, which a porter inhabiting a square low cell close at hand watches over. The men who act in this capacity are commonly Berbers, from Lower Nubia, who have in Egypt a reputation for incorruptible fidelity, like the Swiss guards in Europe.* These quarters, some of which derive their appellation from the profession of those who inhabit them, or from some market-place, bath, or tomb, are all of them traversed by innumerable streets, or rather lanes, courts, or alleys, so narrow for the most part, (some not exceeding two feet and a half in width) that they exclude at all hours the rays of the sun; to effect which more completely, a succession of palm-mats is thrown across on poles, with narrow apertures here and there, to admit a certain supply of light. This custom the generality of European travellers strongly condemn; but when, after a long ride in the suburbs or surrounding country, I have returned to Cairo about the middle of the day, nothing used to appear to me more delightful than to plunge out of the scorching sunshine into the cool and dusky passages, where a brisk current of air is generally felt. No doubt sufficient care is by no means taken to cleanse these streets, which are consequently in many parts filled with offensive and noxious effluvia. This, however, it will be perceived, is a wholly different consideration. Attempts have recently been made by the Government to introduce certain improvements, after the European fashion, widening the streets, and bringing them as near as possible into a straight line, chiefly, however, with reference to the convenience of the Pasha, whose equipage it was impossible to draw through Cairo in its pristine state. These changes may also be beneficial, because a broad and agreeable promenade may during the cool hours of the day tempt the inhabitants to forsake their indolent habits, and walk abroad.

It would be wrong to infer, as from certain accounts one might be tempted to do, that the whole of Cairo, even as it existed originally, was a crowded, pestiferous agglomeration of buildings, in which a large population huddled together could scarcely find room to move or breathe. It is quite true that in many quarters, more particularly in that of the Jews, the population is much concentrated in lofty ill-ventilated, uncleanly houses. But this is not the case universally. In many parts there are large open spaces, encumbered indeed with mounds of rubbish, but perfectly dry. They in some respects answer the purpose of our squares. Again, around the mosques, of which there are nearly four hundred, small and great, there is generally a clear space, commonly swept very clean. Here the air is cooled by a splashing fountain, erected by some pious Moslem for the use of the passers-by. Trees, also, in some cases, wave over the gilded gates, which, in the opinion of the natives, open the way to Paradise. Besides, all the palaces of the great, and many houses of a humbler character,

* Cadalvène et Breuvery, l'Egypte et la Nubie, t. i. p. 96.

open behind into gardens more or less extensive, planted with rows of shady trees, adorned with bowers and alcoves, and almost invariably possessing a fountain or two. Nay, so fond are the Caireens of the aspect of vegetation, that they plant palm-trees even in the narrow courts of their houses, which, soon growing to a great height, at once shade them on their terraces, and impart a beauty to the general aspect of the city. The Kalish or Great Canal, which traverses Cairo in its whole length, is at one season of the year an ornament to the quarters through which it passes, being bordered by gardens and shaded by lofty trees. It then reminds the traveller of Venice, being spanned here and there by light bridges, and reflecting on its broad smooth surface the picturesque façades of the neighbouring houses. But at low Nile, the whole state of the case is changed. It then ceases to be a running stream, and presents to the eye nothing but a succession of green stagnant pools, from which a fetid exhalation perpetually ascends, generating fever and plague. Nevertheless, it was close to this kalish that the unfortunate Burckhardt chose his dwelling. The house, when I saw it, was falling rapidly to decay; moist, yellowish lichens were growing along the walls in patches; the little garden was damp, neglected, and covered with weeds; and I could well fancy the depressed spirits and dreary thoughts which saddened the last days of the enterprising traveller.

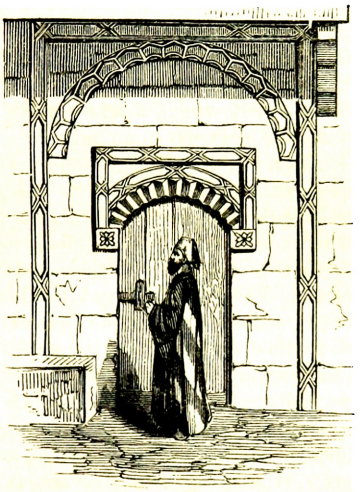
The citadel by which Cairo is overlooked and commanded, is a very striking and spacious structure, erected on a bold lofty projection of the Jebel Mokattam. From almost every open space in the neighbourhood it is beheld white and glittering in the brilliant sunshine, in very marked and extraordinary contrast with the sordid Arab hovels which the eye is able to take in at the same time on the plain below. To the north and to the south are extensive cemeteries, where the taste of the Mohammedans is exhibited to great advantage in the construction and ornaments of their tombs, domes, cupolas, sarcophagi, oblong square basements, and humbler graves, whose frail mounds speedily mingle with the sands of the desert. On one side are the tombs of the Caliphs, a succession of splendid mosques, each adorned with fountains, colonnades, and aspiring minarets, from the upper galleries of which one may behold at a single glance both the city of the living and the cities of the dead, by far the more beautiful and impressive. Towards the Nile, and extending southward from Boulak to the island of Roudah, we behold the palace and gardens of Ibrahim Pasha, with extensive plantations of olive trees, which now occupy the site of those mounds of rubbish, so large as to resemble hills, which formerly encompassed three sides of the city. All are not yet removed, but they are rapidly disappearing. Hundreds of workmen were employed at the task during the whole of my stay.

If we describe now the private dwellings of the inhabitants, it may be observed, that the basement walls, to the height of the first floor, are cased externally, and often internally, with the soft calcareous stone of the neighbouring mountain. Its surface, when newly cut, is of a light-yellowish hue, which, however, soon deepens. The alternate courses of the front, particularly in large houses and mosques, are sometimes painted red and

white, or green, on which, in several cities of Upper Egypt, I observed representations of fishes, trees, and other natural objects. The superstructure, the front of which generally projects about two feet, and is supported by corbels or piers, is of burnt brick, of a dull-red colour, often coated with an inferior kind of plaster.

The external doorways of private houses are generally arched, and ornamented with a kind of torus in low relief. Below, they are furnished with a raised threshold, consisting usually of a single stone. The door itself is sometimes painted green, adorned above with sundry compartments in red, with white borders. On one of these, in black or white characters, is the inscription, "God is the Creator, the Everlasting."

In ordinary houses the street-door commonly consists of a number of planks rudely put together. It has generally an iron knocker and a wooden lock. Close to the entrance is a stone seat, which serves horsemen as a mounting-stone, and is generally occupied in the cool of the evening by the elders of the family engaged in smoking and chatting with their neighbours. The ground-floor apartments near the street have small wooden-grated windows, placed sufficiently high to render it impossible for a person passing by in the street, even on horseback, to see through them. The windows of the upper apartments generally project a foot and a half or more, and are mostly formed of turned lattice-work, which is so close that it shuts out much of the light and sun, and screens the inmates of the house from the view of persons without, while at the same time it admits the air. Occasionally, however, in very warm weather these lattices are thrown wide open, so that it is quite possible for a man riding by on a lofty dromedary to look into the chambers. The wood-work is commonly unstained, though in some few cases it is painted red and green. A window of this kind is called a *rôshan*, or, more commonly, a meshrebéyeh. Sometimes a window of the kind above described has a considerable projection in front, or on each side. In this, in order to be exposed to a current of air, are placed porous earthen bottles, used for cooling water by evaporation. Hence the name of *meshrebéyeh*, which signifies a place for drink, or for drinking.



Street Door of a Dwelling House.

Similar practices for cooling water are resorted to throughout the East. At Bassora they suspend porous vases in the shade, and in a current of air, though the effect thus produced is by no means constant; for when

the north wind blows, the water in these jars is rendered delightfully cool, whereas the south wind is itself so warm and humid, that it cannot operate as a refrigerator. At Bassora, however, the heat is much greater than in Egypt, for drinking-glasses, unless kept constantly filled, become too hot to drink out of. *

The use of glass for windows, formerly almost wholly unknown, is now becoming fashionable in Cairo, the houses of the wealthy being generally furnished with frames, closed in winter to exclude the cold, which is severely felt in Egypt when the thermometer of Fahrenheit is below 60°. Instead of glass, thin plates of gypsum, elaborately painted with gorgeous and glowing colours, are frequently used by the wealthy, so that when opposed to the morning or evening sun, they admit a flood of many-coloured light into the room.

The houses in general are two or three stories high, or sometimes even four in the more populous quarters; and when sufficiently large, inclose an open unpaved court, entered by a passage constructed with one or two turnings, for purposes of privacy. In this passage, just within the door, there is a long stone seat, called mastabáh, built against the back or side wall, for the porter or other servants. In the court is a well of slightly brackish water, which filters through the soil from the Nile; and on its most shaded side are commonly two water-jars, replenished daily from the same river. The principal apartments look into the court; and their exterior walls, when of brick, are plastered and whitewashed. Of the several doors which lead thence into the house, one, called *Babel-harim*, is the entrance of the stairs, leading to the apartments appropriated exclusively to the women, with their master and his children. Most houses of distinction have, on the ground-floor, an apartment called *mandaráh*, which, like the andron of the ancient Greeks, is assigned to the men of the family, who there receive their male visitors. A wide wooden-grated window or two, opening into the court, supplies it with light and air. A portion of the floor, depressed six or seven inches below the rest, is paved with black and white marble, interspersed with pieces of red tile, disposed in fanciful and complicated patterns. Here there is a fountain, whose waters, after rising into the air, fall perpetually with a splashing sound into a shallow basin of many-coloured marbles, diffusing around a refreshing coolness, and soothing the inmates with an agreeable murmur.

Fronting the door there is generally a shelf of marble or common stone, called sooffeh, about four feet from the floor, supported by two or more arches, under which are placed utensils in ordinary use, such as perfuming vessels, basins for ablution, coffee cups, water bottles, &c. In handsome houses the arches of the sooffeh are faced with marble and tile, like the pool of the fountain, and sometimes the wall over it, to the height of about four feet or more, is also cased with similar materials, partly with large upright slabs, and partly with small pieces. The raised part of the floor is called the *leewan*, a corruption of *el eewan*, which signifies "any elevated place to sit upon," and also a "palace." Every person slips off

* Fontanier, Voyage dans l'Inde.

his shoes before he steps upon the *leewan*, chiefly that he may not defile a mat or carpet upon which prayer is usually said. The origin of this practice, which dates from the earliest antiquity, may be traced to the idea, that to go barefoot is a mark of humility; it was to inspire this feeling that the Lord said to Moses, when he stood before the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."* The leewan is generally paved with common stone, covered occasionally with mats and carpets, and is surrounded by a deewan, consisting of a mattress and cushions placed against each of its three walls. The mattress, which is generally about three feet wide, and three or four inches thick, is placed either on the ground, or on a raised frame; and the cushions, which are usually of a length equal to the width of the mattress, and of a height equal to half that measure, lean against the wall. Both mattress and cushions are stuffed with cotton, and covered with printed calico, cloth, or some more expensive stuff. The walls are plastered and whitewashed, and generally contain two or three shallow cupboards, with doors composed of very small panels, on account of the heat and dryness of the climate, which cause wood to warp and shrink as if it were placed in an oven. For this reason the doors of the apartments also are constructed in the same manner. We observe great variety and much ingenuity displayed in the different modes in which these small panels are formed and disposed. The ceiling over the leewan is of wood, with carved beams, generally about a foot apart, partially painted, and sometimes gilt. But that part of the ceiling which is over the durkah, in a handsome house, is usually more richly decorated; here, instead of beams, numerous thin slips of wood are nailed upon the planks, forming patterns curiously complicated, yet perfectly regular, and having a highly ornamental effect. The slips are painted yellow or gilt, and the spaces within green, red, and blue. From the centre a chandelier is often suspended.

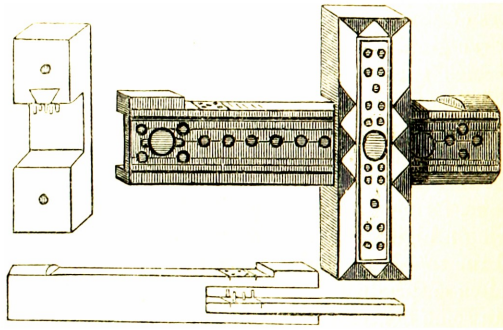
In some houses there is another room, called a *mukád*, for the same use as a mandaráh, having an open front, with two or more arches, and a low railing; and also, on the ground floor, a square recess, called a *sukhtabósh*, with an open front, and generally a pillar to support the wall above; its floor is a paved leewan; and there is often a long wooden sofa placed along each of its three walls. The court, during the summer, is habitually sprinkled with water, which renders the surrounding apartments agreeably cool.

In several of the upper rooms in the houses of the wealthy, there are, besides the window of lattice-work, others of coloured glass, representing bunches of flowers, peacocks, and other gay and gaudy objects, or merely fanciful patterns, which have a pleasing effect. These coloured glass windows are mostly from a foot and a half to two feet and a half in height, and from one to two feet in width, and are generally placed along the top of the projecting lattice window in rows, or disposed in a group so as to form a large square, or elsewhere in the upper parts of the walls, singly or in pairs, side by side. The panes are small pieces of glass of various

* Exodus, iii. 5, comp. Joshua, v. 15.

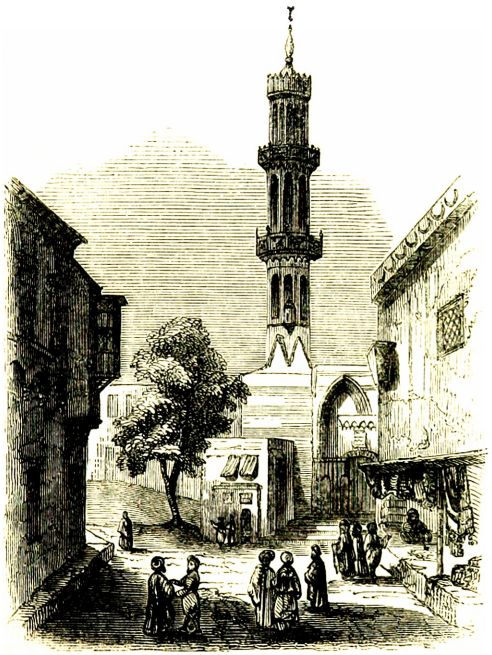
colours, set in a rim of fine plaster, and inclosed in a frame of wood. On the walls of some apartments are paintings of the temple of Mecca, or of the tomb of the Prophet, or of flowers and other objects, executed by native Moslem artists. These occasionally are very tasteful, and in addition to the objects above enumerated, represent scenes in the neighbourhood of the city, in which kiosks and palm-trees are generally conspicuous objects. Sometimes, also, the walls are ornamented with Arabic inscriptions of maxims, &c., written in letters of gold, on paper, in an embellished style, and inclosed in glazed frames. No chambers are furnished as bedrooms. The bed, in the day-time, is rolled up, and placed on one side, or in an adjoining closet, which, in the winter, is a sleeping-place ; in summer many people lie upon the house-top. A mat or carpet, spread upon the raised part of the stone floor, and a deewan, constitute the complete furniture of a room.

Every door is furnished with a wooden lock, the mechanism of which may be thus described. A number of small iron pins, four, five or more, drop into corresponding holes in the sliding bolt, as soon as the latter is pushed into the staple of the door-post. The key, also, has small pins, made to correspond with the holes, into which they are introduced to open the lock: the former pins being thus pushed up, the bolt may be drawn back. The wooden lock of a street-door is commonly about fourteen inches long ; those of the doors of apartments, cupboards, &c., are about seven, eight, or nine inches. The locks of the gates of quarters, public buildings, &c., are of the same kind, and mostly two feet, or even more, in length. It is not difficult to pick or break this kind of lock. In the " Story of the Two Princes, El-Amjad and El-Asad," there occurs a passage which the above description may serve to illustrate. El-Amjad having in the street formed an acquaintance with a strange lady, she offered to accompany him to his house, but living as he did in mean lodgings he was ashamed to take her thither or to acknowledge that he possessed no dwelling of his own. She followed him, and he continued walking on with her from by-street to by-street, and from place to place, until the damsel was tired, and she said to him, " O, my master, where is thy house ? " He answered, " Before us, and there remaineth but a short distance to it." Then he turned aside with her into a handsome by-street, and continued walking along it ; she followed him, until he arrived at the end of it, when he found that it was not a thoroughfare. So he said, " There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great ! " And,



Wooden Lock.

looking towards the upper end of the street, he saw there a great door with two mastabahs; but it was locked. El-Amjad therefore seated himself upon one mastabah, and the damsel seated herself upon the other, and said to him, "O, my master, for what art thou waiting?" Upon this, he hung down his head for a long time towards the ground; after which he raised it, and answered her, "I am waiting for my memlook; for he hath the key, and I said to him, 'Prepare for us the food and beverage, and the flowers for the wine, by the time that I come forth from the bath.'" He then said within himself, "Probably the time will become tedious to her, and so she will go her way and leave me here." But when the time seemed long to her, she said to him, "O, my master, thy memlook hath been slow in returning to us, while we have been sitting in the street." And she arose and approached the wooden lock with a stone. So El-Amjad said to her, "Hasten not; but be patient until the memlook cometh." Paying no attention, however, to his words, she struck the wooden lock with the stone, and split it in two; so that the door opened. He therefore said to her, "What possesseth thee, that thou didst thus?"—"O, my master," said she, "what hath happened? Is it not thy house?"—He answered, "Yes: but there was no necessity for breaking the lock."



Street in Cairo.

In the plan of almost every dwelling there is an utter want of regularity. The apartments are generally of different heights—so that a person has to ascend or descend one, two, or more steps, to pass from one chamber to another adjoining it. The principal aim of the architect is to render the house as private as possible; particularly that part of it which is inhabited by the women; and not to make any window in such a situation as to overlook the apartments of the neighbours. Another object of the architect, in building for a person of wealth or rank, is to make a secret door from which the tenant may make his escape in case of danger from an arrest, or an attempt at assassination; and it is also common to construct a hiding-place for treasure in some part of the house.

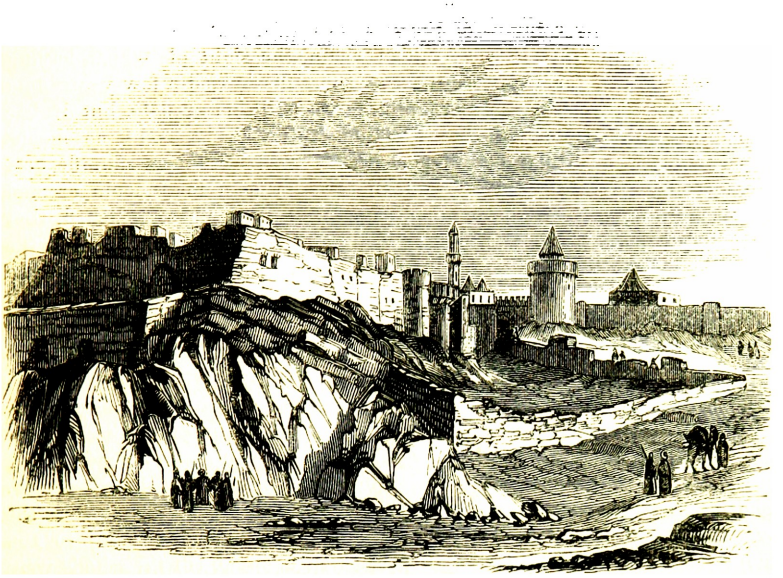
CHAPTER X.

THE CITADEL OF CAIRO.—MASSACRE OF THE MEMLOOKS.

THOUGH many travellers have published their remarks on Cairo, it appears to me that a new and very interesting volume might still be written on that city alone. It is, in fact, an epitome of the whole Eastern world. There, as in a hot-bed, flourish all those vices which have proved the bane of the vast, but often short-lived, despotisms of the East. Converse with whomsoever you please, you quickly discover, amid the charms of the most dazzling and fascinating manners, infernal ideas and principles peeping forth, like the asp and the scorpion, among flowers. Corruption, if not universal, is so general that it seems to exhibit itself everywhere. The very tombs, when a little secluded, are not free from pollution. Yet, in the midst of this vortex of iniquity, the exterior aspect of manners, the features and costume in which society presents itself to the eye of the stranger, are generally solemn and stately; virtue and gravity are complimented with a ritual of hypocritical observances; and barbarians, in whom meanness and ignorance are as the breath of life, affect, in their walk and conversation, a dignity and generosity which belong to the highest wisdom alone. To the traveller, however, all this masquerading furnishes amusement; each day presents some new moral group to his observation; he learns to detect, one after another, the numerous contrivances which are resorted to, by every one, to baffle his penetration; and, perhaps, among all the phenomena which excite his astonishment, none are more truly wonderful than the metamorphoses which Europeans appear to undergo in that Circéan sty. But, besides these ethical pictures, Cairo affords more palpable spectacles, which, though perhaps less instructive, are yet not destitute of interest.

Among these is the citadel, which we early one day proceeded to visit. The crowds which circulate through the streets of this vast city never appeared more animated or gay than on that morning, the fine sunshine which succeeded the previous night's rain, seeming to have quite revived them. On our way to the castle, we passed by several noble mosques and public fountains; many of the latter adorned with marble steps and gilded railings, and furnished with clean bright brass cups, for the use of the people. On arriving at the entrance to the citadel, we were invited to alight, to view the Pasha's menagerie, which consisted of a young elephant, of very meagre appearance, and three lions, not of a large size, which are kept chained (though rather carelessly and slightly) in a wretched shed, closed in front with mats. One of the lions was blind, perhaps from ophthalmia, which, in Egypt, attacks both man and beast; but there was a young lioness of remarkable beauty, though inferior in size to that of the King of Naples at Portici. The Turkish keeper not being present, we witnessed none of those foolish familiarities which are usually exhibited at

menageries between lions and their valets, the Arab deputy being possessed by a salutary fear of those ferocious animals.



Citadel of Cairo.

From this miserable exhibition we ascended into the citadel; which is reached by two winding ascents cut in the solid rock. Of these, one mounts the northern face of the pile, and terminates in the Gate of the Arabs; the other leads from the east towards the Gate of the Janisaries. On entering the great area which occupies its centre, we were exceedingly pleased with the first *coup-d'œil*. The façade of the palace, which, in design, approaches nearer than I could have expected to the European style of architecture, is adorned by a small light portico, with raised terrace, in the Oriental taste; and in front of what may be termed a wing (though it contains the principal apartments), there is another portico, with tall slender columns of elegant form and proportions. On a part of this open space stood formerly the hall of Saladin, in which the Ayubite Sultans dispensed justice to their subjects. The explosion of a powder-magazine in 1824, reduced this ancient structure to so ruinous a state, that it became necessary to pull it down entirely. It was seen, however, by a European traveller in its dilapidated condition, and described in the following terms:—The roof of this edifice is very beautiful. It is formed of a succession of little domes made of wood, into which are introduced concave circles, containing octagons of blue and gold. The corners and arches of the building are carved in the best gothic manner, and in many places the colours and gilding continue perfectly bright. The columns

of rose granite which decorated this celebrated deewan (originally, perhaps, from Memphis)* were subsequently bestowed by Mohammed Ali on the mosque which he caused to be erected on the same site. It has been said that the interior of this mosque is to be faced with alabaster, and adorned by columns of the same beautiful material, obtained from the celebrated quarries in the Arabian chain, the sight of which having been lost sight of for many centuries, was re-discovered a few years ago. When I visited the country the building was still incomplete, but it has probably by this time been finished, though the Pasha is by no means remarkable for a display of diligence in his works of pious munificence. He intends, nevertheless, it is said, to have his own mausoleum erected in this mosque, not being of opinion, as a late traveller has remarked, that after life's fitful fever he should sleep well among the Memlouk Beys in the cemetery below. The scene presented by the persons engaged in clearing the area for the construction of the square and mosque was most striking and characteristic. Parties of women and children were seen running up and down the precipitous rock on which the citadel stands, on planks without railings, removing the rubbish, and carrying mortar for the new building. My heart ached when I saw these poor creatures struck with a thick stick which the overseer flourished in his hand; though but for the blows I should scarcely have known they were not all in play, as they were singing in the loudest key; this, however, I afterwards learned, was compulsory. The different parties, in presenting themselves for work, almost tore the overseers to pieces, screaming out their song, and never ceasing to run round and round, like so many dervishes in a circle, till their hods were emptied or filled. Moved by their apparently hard fate, I was lamenting my inability to relieve the whole of the wretched crowd, when, after a longer inspection, I observed with astonishment how little either the children or women seemed to care for it themselves—the former, with all the hilarity of their early age, were dancing about, and running up and down without their burthens, evidently for pleasure; while the women shrunk away, hiding under the guns, and behind the rubbish, and when detected by the harassed overseers, only flew from the expected blow with a loud laugh: in the end, I scarcely knew who was most to be pitied, the overseers or themselves. Each village sends a certain number of inhabitants for the public works, and also an overseer, who being of the same village, and a countryman, might be expected to feel more compassion than a Turk. The labourers were supplied with as much bread as they could eat, in fact, were better fed than they would have been at home; and on the collection of the taxes, a small sum was remitted to them, equal, I believe, to a penny a day each.†

Intending to be presented to Habib Effendi, the governor of Cairo, we ascended the principal flight of steps; and, passing through the portico, and a long suite of spacious but rather plain apartments, filled with crowds of officers and persons assembled on public business, entered the audience-chamber, where the principal dragoman and a number of attendants were

* Cadalvène, p. 99. † Mrs. Lushington, p. 131.

waiting for the arrival of the governor. We were received politely, and invited to seat ourselves on the divan; while the dragoman, with that restless curiosity which distinguishes the Armenian, immediately commenced making inquiries respecting our professions and pursuits; and we observed that, in order to effect his purpose, he adroitly contrived to mingle a considerable portion of flattery with his questions.

The audience-chamber, smaller in dimensions than that of Alexandria, is much more highly ornamented, both the walls and ceilings being richly adorned with arabesques of very elegant design. The various niches, or recesses, which break the uniformity of the wall, are likewise covered with small landscapes; and both these little paintings, and those which ornament the roof, all representing rural objects (the green fields, the groves, the winding river, the sea-shore, with temples and ruins interspersed), are extremely well conceived, though executed in that stiff, inanimate style, which prevailed in Italy before the time of Giotto. In a large recess, at the bottom of the room, we observed the instruments for administering torture: a small pole, with a loop of reddish cord suspended from the centre, for containing the feet; and the koorbash, or strip of hippopotamus hide, with which the strokes on the soles are given. Through the windows, which were partly hung with fine chintz curtains, we could command a very magnificent view of the city and environs of Cairo.

It was not long before Habib Effendi arrived. He was a man somewhat advanced in years, with a cold savage look, but handsome. Yet, though possessing much finer features, we could discover in his countenance nothing of that intelligence and energy which light up with interest the face of Mohammed Ali. He was calm and quiet; but there was a feebleness in his eye incompatible with great powers of mind. Our conversation with him, if conversation it could be called, was perfectly commonplace. He put a great number of questions, but none which denoted acuteness or capacity; and, long before he terminated his inquiries, I was impatient to take my leave. While this scene was enacting, the rightful heir to the throne of the Hejaz, a lineal descendant of the Prophet, taken prisoner by the Pasha, and detained in Egypt as a hostage, entered the audience-chamber, and took his seat on the divan. He appeared to be engaged in conversation with the governor, but constantly cast a curious, inquiring look upon us. His complexion was very dark, almost black; his features sharp, angular, unprepossessing; his figure short and undignified. He was dressed in green, the livery of the Prophet's descendants; but his turban was flat and of a different colour. The governor, to do him justice, was exceedingly obliging, and readily granted us permission to see both the palace and the harem; that is, as much as could be viewed without encroaching upon the parts actually occupied by the ladies.

Taking our leave of his Excellency, we proceeded to visit the curiosities included within the walls of the citadel. Previous to this, however, the kawass conducted us to the terrace of the palace, which commands one of the noblest and most extensive views in the world. Here the eye, almost at a single glance, takes in the whole city of Cairo, with its innumerable gilded domes and minarets, its squares and bazaars, and public places, its

walls, and gates, and groves, and gardens, and battlements; and those vast melancholy suburbs,—the cemeteries,—whither the gay and giddy Caireens, when the dream of life is over, retire to their eternal abodes. A little beyond, winding its way through the richest valley of Africa, was the bountiful Nile, whose broad surface, studded with numerous sails, glittered in the morning sun like a sheet of molten silver. On the right hand were the tombs of the khalifs, Boulak, and the site of Heliopolis; behind us, the sterile ridges of Mokattam; to the left, the spacious plains, where once stood Babylon, Troia, Acanthus, and Memphis, cities which, excepting in the pages of history, have left no certain traces of their existence. Farther still, and beyond the reach of the inundation, were the pyramids of Ghizeh, Sakkarah, Abousir, and Dashour, skirting the boundless expanse of the Libyan desert, whose dim, dismal colour seemed to be diffused over everything on both sides of the river; for, in this interminable landscape, the fields, groves, and gardens of the valley appeared like mere specks of verdure in an ocean of sand and rock and water. Directly under the palace windows was a large open space, in which several regiments of the Pasha's military slaves were performing their evolutions, marching, charging, firing, and the other operations of war.

It ought here, perhaps, to be observed, that the citadel covers the side and summit of an eminence divided by a narrow valley, from the Mokattam range. In the age of Saladin, by whom it was erected, it may doubtless have been a strong place, and sufficed to overawe the city; but, although it be skilfully fortified and furnished with thirty large guns and ten mortars, it can no longer be regarded as formidable to a European enemy. It is, in fact, completely commanded by a spur of the Jebel Mokattam, on which, for that reason, Mohammed Ali some years ago constructed a fort. Of this the Duke of Ragusa judges favourably, and although in any other matter his testimony is of little value, we may allow it some weight in an affair of this kind. "It is," he remarks, "a fort built in the Turkish style, but with considerable care. It is capable, therefore, of offering some resistance, and may be deemed impregnable by the enemy most likely to bring a force against it, since it can scarcely be supposed that it will ever have to sustain a regular siege. It is a small square with a revêtement, in the midst of which rises a tower, the whole mounted with cannon."*

Returning into the palace, we visited the Mint, a wretched establishment, where we found a few Arab workmen employed in hammering out four-piastre pieces (gold coins, value one shilling) on clumsy little anvils. The currency of Egypt passes for thirty-three and one-third per cent. more than its full value; that is, the *kheri*, or nine-piastre piece, which has been assayed at Genoa and Paris, is worth only six piastres. The value of the gold used up annually by the Pasha's Mint, has been estimated at about two hundred thousand pounds. The gradual deterioration of all Turkish coin, and especially of the paras, has compelled the viceroy to renounce the manufacture of these small pieces, which constituted some years ago one of

* T. iii. p. 281.

the most active branches of Egyptian commerce. It will be easy to appreciate the deterioration which these coins have undergone, if we remark that in 1772, under the government of Ali-Bey, ninety paras were worth one Spanish dollar; the value of the same coin was fixed at one hundred and fifty paras at the time of the French expedition, and at present it answers to eight hundred! *

From the Mint we proceeded to Saladin's Well.† Though we had with us a kawass, or officer of the governor, we experienced some difficulty in gaining admittance; a difficulty which was satisfactorily accounted for when we had descended. The entrance to this great work, which is far more useful than magnificent, and has little in it, more than a great coal-pit, to strike the imagination, is as mean and obscure as that into a cellar. Kindling each a small wax taper to light him, we all followed the footsteps of the guide. The well is of a square form, cut perpendicularly, though not in one continued shaft, in the solid rock, to the depth of about three hundred and eighty feet; that is, to a level with the waters of the Nile. A little more than half-way down, it widens into a spacious chamber, containing a large deep cistern, and the wheel, turned by a cow, draws up the series of small earthen pots (attached to a rope, as in a common *sakia*) by which the cistern is replenished. A similar apparatus at the top fills the cisterns which supply the citadel, and are so capacious that one of them would contain water enough to serve a large garrison during a whole year. A narrow staircase, hewn out in the rock, winds round the well from top to bottom, with so easy a descent, that you might almost ride down on horseback; on assback you certainly might. In fact, the cow or bullock, which turns the wheel below, descends this staircase, which resembles a Macadamised road, though there seem formerly to have been steps. At short intervals cut in the rock, there are several large windows for the purpose of admitting light, and to enable those descending the staircase to look out into the well; and these windows, except that they are much larger and lower, considerably resemble those in the galleries of the Simplon. When we had reached the great chamber, or half-way house, our guide related to us the ostensible reason—a desire to be bribed being the real one—why so much difficulty is now experienced in obtaining permission to descend. About five years ago a man was murdered in that very chamber, where his body being discovered, our *cicerone* himself had been suspected of the deed, and cast into prison; but, having remained twenty-one days in confinement, and no proofs of his guilt appearing—perhaps none were sought—he was liberated. The murdered man, an Armenian, had gone down with a sum of money about him; and the spot where the body had been found was pointed out to us, perhaps by the man who had hidden it there. On the same side of the gallery we were shown a large fissure in the rock, now walled up, to which another legend is appended. Two or three years ago, the cow employed in turning the water-wheel, on being liberated from her task in the evening, squeezed

* Cadalvène, i. 101.

† Commonly called Joseph's Well, because the prenomen of Saladin was Yussuf; but it is better to avoid the equivoque and the explanation by denominating it at once Saladin's Well.

herself into this fissure, and, wandering away into some dark unexplored passage, entirely disappeared. One of the poor Arabs, more venturous than his companions, taking a lamp in his hand and overcoming his national apprehension of the Marid and the Jinn, entered in search of her, but was never more heard of. Twelve days they awaited his return, but at the expiration of that period, giving him up for lost, they walled up the cavern, thus cutting off all chance of his escape from the Stygian gloom. Perhaps he fell, by some oblique descent, into the well below, and they may now be drawing water from among his bones. The wheels, pots, ropes, &c., had an extremely antique and dilapidated appearance; and, if much used, would undoubtedly fall to pieces. But the excavation itself is a splendid work, and well worthy of the chivalrous Sultan who executed it.

Our next visit was to the apartments appropriated to the use of the Translation Committee, which is under the direction of a Frenchman and an Armenian, both of whom received us very politely. A number of young scribes of various countries were squatting about the rooms on divans and carpets, translating books or documents, or interpreting them to secretaries. The greater number, perhaps the whole of these young men, were Christians; or, if there were any Mohammedans among them, they were far from being rigid Islamites. The printing-office, close at hand, where the Cairo Gazette, in Arabic, is printed, is a small insignificant establishment, which would be nowhere remarkable but in such a country as Egypt. The *press*, the *tympans*, the *galleys*, the *sticks*, the *balls*, &c., were all of a very inferior description, and the *forms* appear to be made up in a slovenly way upon the press itself. There were but few compositors or pressmen at work, but they all seemed rather expert. The Arabic manuscripts from which they were composing, written on one side only, were such as European compositors rarely meet with—extremely legible, the lines being wide apart, and the interlineations and corrections very carefully made. The works which have issued from the press—generally history and poetry—have hitherto met with but little favour from the Arabs, whether the blame is to be attributed to their poverty or their want of taste. Mohammed Ali's authors meet with, in fact, but few buyers, so that the records of their labours, piled up in warehouses, are abandoned as a prey to the rats and mice, or to be decomposed slowly under the influence of the climate. The reason is obvious. No pains are taken to adapt the publications to the wants and predilections of the people, who care little to read histories which dare record no truth, if it happen to be unpleasing to the Pasha, and who have little relish for poetry which derives its inspiration from a state of society which has no analogy with theirs.

Having passed through the apartments where the diplomatic scribes and secretaries were at work, we entered the council chamber, where we were introduced to the president, a merry old Turk, who laughed and chatted with amazing volubility. The council of which he is the chief, consists of a number of individuals, public officers, and government clerks, who assemble daily for the despatch of business. This is what, in Europe, has been denominated the senate, or parliament of Egypt; but it is a parliament of a very extraordinary kind. When the Pasha has anything

agreeable to do, he does it himself, without consulting this wretched assembly, which, he well knows, would not dare to entertain an opinion different from his; but when application is made to him for money, or some favour is demanded, which it might be inexpedient to grant and imprudent to refuse, he suddenly feigns a high veneration for the authority of his council, refers the applicants to them, and while he imperiously directs their decisions, shifts off the odium upon their shoulders. Such is the parliament of Egypt.

The next object of our curiosity was the harem. It will not, of course, be supposed that we beheld the ladies; it was an unusual favour to be allowed to enter at all into the female apartments; to see the rooms in which they usually sit, and the divans from which they had just risen to make way for us. Crossing a large gravelled court, we entered a spacious hall, divided into compartments by many rows of elegant columns. A grand staircase of white marble conducted us to the principal apartment on the first floor, which was in the form of a Greek cross, large, lofty, tastefully ornamented, with numerous noble windows commanding nearly the same prospect as the terrace near the divan. The *Kaáh* where, when in Cairo, the Pasha usually sits, surrounded by his family, was finely matted and furnished with a soft and beautiful divan of scarlet cloth, with a long blue silk fringe hanging to the floor, running round three sides of the apartment. A recess adorned with carved ornaments and slender columns with gilded capitals, occupied the bottom of the room. Arabesques and landscapes, executed in the same style as those in the audience-chamber, adorned the ceiling of this spacious apartment, which would be admired even in London. It measures one hundred and fifty by one hundred and twenty feet, is furnished with large plate glass windows, and paved with marble slabs, of the extraordinary size of eighteen feet in the square. The furniture of the side rooms was cloth of gold, embossed with tulips and roses, in purple and green velvet, and had been brought from Constantinople. The bed-chambers, offices, &c., were neat, and scrupulously clean, but contained nothing remarkable.

While passing through a small ante-chamber we met a young Memlook —a Greek or Georgian boy, about nine years old, beautiful as an angel. His exquisite little mouth, his fair complexion, his dark eyes, and finely arched eyebrows, his smooth lofty forehead and clustering ringlets— everything conspired to enhance his loveliness. Anywhere else I should have supposed it to be a girl in disguise. In a large apartment in this part of the palace we were shown the Pasha's children. We found the three young princes sitting side by side on a carpet at the farther end of the room, busily engaged with their writing lessons, under the direction of a master; and when we were presented to them they looked up surprised and wonder-stricken, like children to whom such things were not familiar, and cast many furtive inquiring glances at each other, but did not speak. They must have been by three different mothers, as their ages seemed nearly the same. The one who, if there was any difference, appeared to be the youngest, may have been about five years old; he was dressed in green; and there was a pride and fire in his eye which strikingly distin-

guished him from his brethren. They were accompanied in their studies by a number of other boys, all under twelve years old; and their governor, a grave venerable Turk, seemed pleased to exhibit his pupils, but did not run into the common fault of flattering them by extraordinary praise.

I had been dissuaded from demanding permission to enter the old mosque in the citadel, from an apprehension of being refused; but while the rest of the party were otherwise engaged, I walked up to the door, where I found two soldiers, a negro on the one side, and an Arab on the other, both looking good-tempered; I, therefore—the interpreter being absent—inquired by signs whether I might go in, and they replied, in the same language, and with smiles, that I might. So I stepped over the threshold, and found myself in a spacious Mohammedan place of worship. It was a hypæthral building, consisting of a neatly paved area, and a series of arcades, resembling the colonnades of a monastery, which extended all round. The minaret, which towers far above every other part of the citadel, is remarkable for the chasteness of its design, which is exceedingly light and elegant, the turret, galleries, and fairy cupola harmonising finely together. On either side of the door-way was an antique column. The one on the left hand was surmounted by a curious capital, which could be referred to no order of architecture; but that on the right belonged to the Corinthian order, and the foliage is most rich and delicately executed.

On leaving the citadel we descended by the road which had been the scene of the slaughter of the Memlooks. On our right and left were the lofty walls and buildings from the summit of which the Albanians had fired on their victims. The road, as I have already observed, is cut in the rock, and commencing at the summit of the hill goes down its steep slope, winding now to the right, now to the left, in obedience to the accidents of the ground, and narrowed exceedingly in parts by projecting angles of the rock. At the bottom, a strong gate opens upon the place Roumeileh. On the morning of the massacre, March 1st, 1811, all the Memlook Beys in Northern Egypt repaired, at the invitation of the Pasha, to the citadel. Shahin Bey appeared at the head of his house. He came with the other chiefs to pay his respects to the Pasha, who awaited them in the great reception hall. He caused coffee to be handed round, and entered into conversation with them. The whole having assembled, the signal for departure was given; each took the place assigned to him by the master of the ceremonies. A corps of Dehlis, commanded by Uzoun-Ali, took the lead; then came the Wali, the Aga of the Janisaries, and the Chief of the Commissariat, the Ojaklis, the Yoldashes; next was Saleh-Kosh with his Albanians; and following him were the Memlooks, led by Soliman Bey, El-Bawâb; the infantry, the cavalry, and the officers of the government. The head of the column was ordered to descend along the steep road above described, towards the gate El-Azab, opening upon the place Roumeileh. But no sooner were the Dehlis and Aghas fairly out of the defile than Saleh Kosh gave orders to shut the gate, and communicated to his followers the Viceroy's command, to exterminate all the Memlooks.

The Albanians immediately turned round, and climbing to the top of the rocks on either side of the road, to be out of reach of their adversaries, and to take a surer aim, fired upon them.

Having heard the report of the guns, the hindermost troops began in turn to fire from the summit of the rocks which afforded them protection. The Memlooks, who had reached the first gate, tried to take another route to return to the citadel, but not being able to manage their steeds, on account of the difficult position in which they found themselves engaged, and seeing many of their companions already killed or wounded, they alighted, abandoned their horses, and took off their upper garments. In this desperate situation they retraced their steps sword in hand; but no one would oppose them face to face; they were shot down from the houses. Shahin Bey fell before the gate of Saladin's palace. Solyman Bey El-Bawâb ran half-naked to implore in his fear the protection of the harem, which among the Memlooks was looked upon as a sanctuary; but in vain; he was dragged to the palace, where the Viceroy gave orders to cut off his head. Others went to implore the mercy of Toussoun-Pasha, who took no part in the transaction.

Those who were not killed by the fire, were dragged from their horses and stripped naked; with a handkerchief bound round their heads, and another round their waists, they were led before the Pasha and his sons, and by them ordered to immediate execution. Even there the suffering was aggravated, and, instead of being instantly beheaded, many were not at first wounded mortally; they were shot in different parts of their bodies with pistols, or stuck with daggers; many struggled to break loose from those who held them; some succeeded, and were killed in corners of the citadel, or on the top of the Pasha's harem. Others, quite boys of twelve or fourteen years, cried eagerly for mercy, protesting, with very obvious truth, that they were innocent of any conspiracy, and offering themselves as slaves to the Pasha: all these, and, in short, every one, however young and incapable of guilt, or however old and tried in his fidelity, the most elevated and the most obscure, were hurried before the Pasha, who sternly refused them mercy, one by one, impatient until he was assured the destruction was complete.*

Orders were now sent round to the troops to seize upon all Memlooks wherever they might be found, and no sooner were they taken than they were led before the Kiaya-Bey, who gave instant orders for their decapitation. Many individuals who were not included among the obnoxious party, perished in spite of their innocence, so eager did the soldiers become in the work of carnage. The corpse of Shahin-Bey was dragged by a rope round its neck here and there through the city. The citadel was one vast bloody arena: the mutilated bodies of the dead encumbered the passages; on all sides were seen richly-caparisoned horses stretched by the side of their masters; Saïs or foot-attendants, pierced with balls; broken weapons and garments stained with blood: all the booty was given up to the soldiery. In the morning were counted four hundred and seventy mounted Memlooks; not one of them escaped from the massacre.

* Walpole, Memoirs on European and Asiatic Turkey.

None of the French Memlooks were included in the proscription. Those who happened to be in the citadel in the service of the governor, were warned by the Kiaya-Bey, who shut them up in a chamber adjoining his own, to protect them from all injury. Mourad-Bey, of the house of Elfy, had for a long time employed them about his person; by a lucky accident they did not ride out that day.

Amin-Bey did not share the sad fate of his colleagues. He had delayed taking part in the ceremony; for being detained in his house by some pressing business, he did not arrive near the citadel until the Dehlis had commenced defiling from the gate El-Azab. The issuing forth of this troop prevented him from entering; he waited for it to pass; but seeing the gate close after them, and hearing almost at the same time the firing, he put spurs to his horse and escaped with his suite to Basatin, whence he repaired to Syria, under the protection of an Arab Sheikh, of the province of Sharkieh.

Scarcely had the procession put itself in motion, when the Pasha became uneasy; his movements betrayed his feelings. When he heard the first discharge of musketry, his agitation redoubled; he turned pale; fearing lest, through his orders not being punctually obeyed, a combat should be begun, which might compromise the safety of his family, and even his own life. The sight of the prisoners and the heads that were brought in relieved him from his fear, but did not restore serenity to his countenance, or appease the anguish of his mind. Soon afterwards the Genoese Mendrici, one of his physicians, entered the apartment where he was, and drawing near to him said gaily—"The affair is over; this must be a day of rejoicing to your highness." The prince answered nothing, but his silence was expressive; he then asked for something to drink.

Meanwhile the passage of the procession was anxiously awaited in the city; all the inhabitants assembled in the streets had come out to take part in the solemnity. The crowd blocked up the entrance to the shops. After long waiting, the Dehlis, with the Aghas and their suite, appeared. A sullen silence, precursor of the sinister events which were soon to be known, succeeded the passage of this troop. An instant after, a number of terrified Saïs passed, running at intervals, without uttering a single word. This sudden flight had given rise to a thousand conjectures, when a confused noise was heard, and a voice exclaimed—"Shahin-Bey is killed!" Upon this the shops were instantly shut, and every one hastened to retire to his own house. The streets were soon deserted. Nothing was to be seen but bands of soldiers, rushing pell-mell into the houses of the proscribed to sack and plunder them. These ruthless men committed all kinds of atrocities; the women were insulted, their clothes torn from their backs; and a soldier even, in his eagerness to gain possession of a bracelet which was on a lady's wrist, actually cut off her hand.

The Turks, who could only marry women of an inferior class, saw with displeasure that those of a higher rank, disdaining their alliance, showed the greatest eagerness to ally themselves with a Memlook family. They had the baseness to revenge themselves on this occasion upon a defenceless sex. The spoils were incalculable. The houses of the Beys were rich;

many among them were making preparations for marriage; furniture, costly stuffs, Kashmeers, and jewels, had been bought. Not only were the houses of the proscribed sacked, but those in their neighbourhood underwent the same fate; on every side were seen traces of pillage. The city resembled a place taken by storm; no inhabitant appeared in the street; all waited in their own retreat the fate decreed him by destiny.

The following day the soldiers indulged in the same excesses; murder and pillage continued. At length Mohammed Ali thought it his duty to descend from the citadel; he was followed by numbers of armed men, on foot, in state costume. He traversed various quarters. At each post he severely reprimanded the chiefs for having permitted such crimes; but these, far from having attempted to restrain their men, had been the first to set the example of pillage. Near Bab-El-Zoweyleh, the governor encountered a Moggrebin, who complained of the pillage of his house, asserting that he was neither soldier nor Memlook; the prince stopped, inquired into the matter, and sent to the man's house some of his guards, who arrested a Turk and a fellah, whose heads were ordered to be cut off. In advancing towards the quarter of Kakkir, some one came to tell him the Sheikhs had assembled in order to come and compliment him. The Pasha replied, that he would go in person to receive their felicitations. He repaired to the house of Sheikh-El-Sherkawy, and having passed an hour with him, returned to the citadel.

Next day Toussoun-Pasha traversed the streets, followed by a numerous guard, causing all those whom he found engaged in pillage to be decapitated. It was necessary to take the severest measures, for the city would have been otherwise completely ravaged. Nevertheless, the search after the Memlooks was continued, and even the most aged and those who had never quitted Cairo were put to death. The Kiaya-Bey was their most inveterate enemy; no one obtained mercy in his sight. Many, however, in spite of his diligence, escaped by hiding with the Dehlis and taking their costume; and others, disguised as women, repaired to Upper Egypt.

The Viceroy had communicated his secret to Hassan-Pasha, to Saleh-Kosh, to the Kiaya-Bey, and to Soliman-Agha, his selikdar. He had caused his Deewan-Effendi to write to the governors of provinces orders to arrest and put to death all the Memlooks who were scattered among the villages. Provided with the authority of their master, the Kashefs put to death without distinction all those whom they wished to get rid of; their heads were sent to Cairo, where they were exposed in public. The sight of this bloody spectacle re-awakened feelings which had begun to be deadened; and vengeance dictated new death-warrants. Omar-Bey-Elfy was seized in the Fayoom, whither he had escaped; and his head and fifteen others were exhibited on the same day. Those of the principal Beys were skinned, and sent to Constantinople. The corpses were thrown pell-mell into holes dug in the citadel. There perished on this occasion more than a thousand persons.

The relations of the Memlooks, overwhelmed by their own misfortunes, could not demand the dead that they might give them sepulture. The mother of Marzouk-Bey obtained, however, the body of her son, which was

recognised after three days' search ; he was the only one buried in the tomb of his family. The Pasha granted safeguards to the women of the Memlooks, and allowed his favourites to take some of them as wives.

In many cases, however, a still worse fate awaited them. Stripped of nearly all their clothes, deprived of every refuge, they were long left wandering without a protector, without a home, and even without bread.

After this tragic event, a Kashef, sent by the Beys of Upper Egypt, came to inform the Pasha that they were at Beyra, that they entreated for mercy, and a place whither they might retire and live in peace. The governor made him wait for an answer, and secretly sent Mustapha-Bey, his brother-in-law, to Upper Egypt, with the command of all the troops, and orders to make war on the Memlooks. The messenger of the Beys followed him with this intelligence, which he carried to the camp at Beyra.

The order of the Viceroy was punctually obeyed in the Saïd. Sixty-four Memlooks taken in the province were brought to Old Cairo ; they were put to death at night, by torch-light ; their heads were exposed at Bab-El-Zoweyleh, and their bodies thrown into the Nile.*

It may not be uninteresting to follow a few steps further the fortunes of the Memlooks. About eleven hundred of them, under the command of Ibrahim Bey, escaped the ferocious persecution of Mohammed Ali, and cut their way into Nubia, closely pursued by a Turkish army under Ibrahim Pasha. Being encumbered with baggage and women, they could not march with their usual rapidity, and the Turks at length came up with them about night-fall. Feeling sure of his victims, Ibrahim Pasha would not attack them in the dark, but pushing forward a small body in advance of their position, held them as it were in a trap. The Memlooks, far inferior in numbers, assembled anxiously to deliberate. On one side they were hemmed in by their enemies ; on the other lay the broad Nile. Towards the dead of night, when the Turkish camp was buried in profound sleep, the Memlooks mounted their horses, and placing their wives and the most valuable of their effects before them, plunged into the stream, and succeeded, without the loss of a man, in traversing it. According to some, the Nile at that very place is fordable ; others say that their horses swam the stream. Be this as it may, it is impossible to describe the rage of the Turks next morning on discovering that their prey had escaped them. Escaped, however, they had, and that so completely, that the most eager pursuit proved wholly unavailing. The Memlooks succeeded in reaching Dongola, where, after destroying the petty chiefs of the country, they armed five or six thousand blacks. One of their Beys was acquainted with the art of casting cannon, and among them were many English and French deserters.†

* Mengin, Histoire de l'Egypte.

† Captain Light.

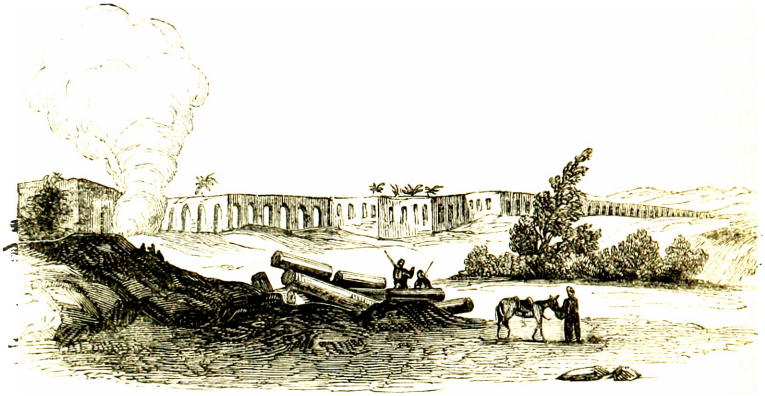
CHAPTER X.

THE SPHINX—THE PYRAMIDS.

THE traveller's sojourn at Cairo is usually diversified by a number of excursions each, to borrow a phrase from the Arabian Nights, more interesting than the other. We enjoyed exceedingly our visit to the Citadel, with its numerous historical associations and actual display of magnificence; we felt that we were traversing a Scriptural landscape as our feet wandered towards Heliopolis and the Fountain of the Sun. One of the events recorded in Exodus appeared to be enacting before us, when through a gap in the Arabian chain we diverged away from the cultivated country into the Valley of the Wanderings. Similar were our sensations when traversing the skirts of the Libyan Desert; we made our way towards the Fayoom, with its orange plantations, rose gardens, and the ruins of that wonderful labyrinth and still more wonderful lake, which, surviving its twin-marvel, still bares its broad bosom to the sun, in the midst, as it were, of the Great Sahara. But none of these enjoyments was perhaps so replete with pleasure as our visit to the great pyramids of Ghizeh. To most persons those structures have now been rendered familiar by description. Thousands of travellers have beheld them, hundreds have delineated their forms, and repeated their dimensions. But this consideration does not in the slightest degree diminish the delight with which the European who arrives for the first time at Cairo undertakes his little expedition across the Nile. On the morning fixed for our first visit to the Pyramids, we rose several hours before day, and, having breakfasted, mounted our donkeys, and set out in the dark. Our Janissary, likewise riding on an ass, preceded us through the streets, and an Arab with a lantern ran before to light us along. It had rained hard during the night, and the ground was so slippery that two or three of our party fell down with their beasts before we had proceeded the length of a single street. The Muezzins from the minarets of the various mosques were summoning the people to their devotions—"Arise, ye faithful, and pray! Prayer is better than sleep!" And these sounds descending through the air at that calm and still hour, before dawn had lighted up the earth, before any other indication of life was abroad, had a thrilling, solemn effect, nearly allied to piety. The streets of Cairo, traversed at such a time, present a curious appearance. No lamps, no movement, no sign of inhabitants but the Berber porters and gate-keepers slumbering in their cloaks on the bare earth.

After traversing a large portion of the city, followed by troops of savage dogs, we emerged into the country, where we found, even thus early, the labourers of Ibrahim Pasha employed in levelling and carrying away the mounds of rubbish which used to encumber the environs of Cairo. In approaching Masr-el-Atikeh, we saw on our left the Great Aqueduct, which

conveys the water of the Nile to the citadel. Apropos of this aqueduct, a very absurd story is told. The architect, they say, in constructing the



Aqueduct of the Nile to Cairo.

steep winding passage which leads to the summit, forgot half his design, and made it too narrow to admit the oxen that were to work the water-wheels; in consequence of which a number of calves were carried up, and kept there until they acquired the necessary size. But how the wheels were turned while the calves were growing, the story sayeth not. Another story, which may be better founded, is, that the King of England a few

Old Cairo.

years ago presented the Pasha with a complete hydraulic apparatus, for raising the water of the Nile into this aqueduct, which was utterly spoiled by the engineer employed in setting it up.

Having passed through a portion of Masr-el-Atikeh, or Old Cairo, we arrived about sunrise at the ferry, and embarked upon the Nile. The prospect, as we moved across, was truly magnificent. The long lines of white buildings on the eastern bank; the tower of the Nilometer; the groves and gardens on the Island of Rhoudah; the village of Ghizeh, flanked by palm-woods; glimpses of the Libyan Desert between the trees; the lofty summits of the Pyramids; the broad bosom of the river enlivened by numerous sails; the partially clouded sky illumined by the first rays of the sun,—all these elements harmonising beautifully together, formed a panorama of incomparable interest. But the air was exceedingly keen and cold, so that our thoughts were often diverted from the landscape to the means of protecting ourselves from the wind. At a short distance to the south of the point where we crossed, the patriarch Joseph, according to a tradition of the Moslems, was buried in the Nile. They laid his body, it is said, in a stone coffin, closed it with lead, and covered it with a varnish which keeps out air and water, and then threw it into the river opposite the town of Memphis, where in the fourth century of the Hegira stood the Mosque of Yusuf. Arriving at Ghizeh, on the western bank, we remounted, and pushed on hastily towards *Sakkiet Mekkah*. The plain we now traversed being intersected in various directions by canals, and partly covered by broad sheets of water, the remains of the inundation, between which in many places lay the road, over slippery causeways or banks of earth, barely wide enough to admit of one person's riding along them at a time. Large flights of ibises, as white as snow, continually kept hovering about us or alighted on the lakes, while several other kinds of water-fowl, of brilliant plumage, were scattered here and there in flocks. A great portion of the plain was covered with forests of date-palms, of magnificent growth, planted in regular lines; and springing up from a level carpet of grass or young corn of the brightest green. Interspersed among these woods and numerous smaller groves of tamarisks and acacias, were the villages, mosques, and Sheikhs' tombs; not unpleasing objects when beheld by a cheerful eye. Here and there were fields of ripe dhourra sefi, a species of Indian corn, of prodigious powers of increase, which grows to a great height, and forms a principal ingredient in the food of the Arabs. Hamilton reckoned on one ear of this corn three thousand grains; and a lady who frequently made the experiment in the Thebaid, constantly found between eighteen hundred and two thousand.

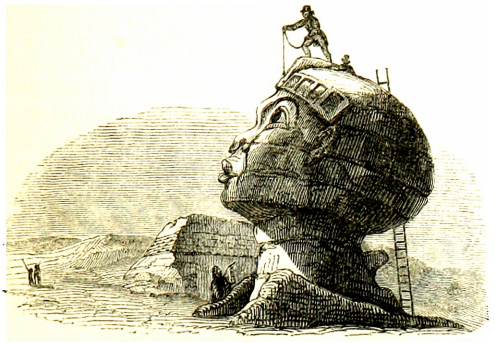
As, owing to the quantity of water which still remained from the inundation, the pathway turned in various directions, and proceeded in a very circuitous manner, we often seemed to be moving towards the East, and caught a view of the Mokattam mountains: frequently the pyramids of Sakkarah, Abousir, and Dashour became visible in the distance towards the south; but though they are many in number, I could discover no more than seven. The appearance of the country continued exceedingly fine; and the rocks and gray sand-hills of the Desert, which bounded our view towards the west, seemed only to enhance by contrast the splendour of the intervening landscape. It would appear to be mere prejudice to suppose that a fine level country like Egypt contemplated through an atmosphere

of extraordinary purity, with a surface diversified by all the accidents of wood and water, rustic architecture, flocks and herds, and hemmed in by rocks and sands eternally barren, must necessarily be insipid and unpicturesque. The landscape now before me was beautiful; and there are artists in England who, from such materials, and without overstepping the modesty of Nature, could create pictures to rival the softest scene among the works of Claude. The date-palm itself is a lovely object, far more lovely than I have ever seen it represented by the pencil; and when beheld in its native country, relieved against a deep blue sky, or against the yellow sands of the desert, with a herd of buffaloes, a long string of laden camels, or a troop of Bedouins passing under it, lance in hand, it constitutes a perfect picture. But when we have before us whole forests of these trees, of all sizes, from ten to one hundred feet in height, intermingled with mimosas, acacias, tamarisks, and Egyptian sycamores, more noble, if possible, than the oak, disposed in arched echoing walks, with long green vistas, glimpses of cool shady lakes, villages, mosques, pyramids, the whole over-canopied by a sky of stainless splendour, and glowing beneath the pencil of that arch-painter, the sun, nothing seems to be wanting but genius to discover the elements of the most magnificent landscapes.

The pyramids themselves, though towering far above everything around, did not disclose all their vastness, there being no object near by which to judge by comparison of their magnitude. Standing alone in the desert, which they exactly resemble in colour, they appeared to appertain to and form a part of it; but before we approached them they seemed near, quite at hand, and the intervening space, a field or two, over which we should pass in a few minutes. We rode on for another hour; and though they certainly seemed to have increased in dimensions, there was no very striking difference in their aspect: yet we could see that we had still some space to traverse. Another hour: the pyramids had insensibly increased in bulk; the sun occasionally shone upon them, and gilded their peaks, and the shadows of the clouds as they passed along travelled over them as over the face of a mountain. At length we crossed the Bahr Yusuf, emerged from the cultivated country and entered upon the desert, where our animals sank deep, at every step, into the sand, stretching away in mound and valley interminably towards the left; while flocks of plovers, quails, ibises, &c., rested upon the fields on the right, or skimmed along the atmosphere, tempting our sportsmen. A considerable space of sand, interspersed with small patches of a kind of prickly plant, eaten by the camel, still remained to be crossed. We now saw a number of Bedouins hastening towards us, to offer their services as guides; the greater number were tall, muscular, clean-limbed, young men, in many cases handsome; and they all appeared lively and good humoured. There were far too many of them: but though they were so informed, and positively assured that they could not be all employed, not one of the number would relinquish the hope of earning a piastre, and the whole party, laughing and chattering, ran bounding along over the heavy sand, with as light and springy a step as if it had been a smooth gravel walk.

At length we entered the hollow valley, at the foot of the Pyramids,

in which the Sphinx is buried all but the head. Three superb spreading trees, nourished by a hidden fountain, afford an agreeable shade in the centre of this burning hollow; and there, should I ever revisit the spot, I would pitch my tent during my stay. The features of the Sphinx, whatever their beauty or merit may formerly have been, are now so time-worn and mutilated by violence that they can scarcely be said to represent the human countenance; but from the outline of the face, no man, not under the influence of some visionary system, could ever, I think, conclude with Volney that the physiognomy was that of a negro. Even Denon, who has delineated the Sphinx with a negro face, contradicts in his text the authority of his own pencil. Were the whole of this hollow cleared of the sand which now encumbers it, and the land restored to cultivation, as it might be without any very extraordinary expense, the Sphinx, in spite of the injuries of time, might once more be a sublime object; as it is, the greater part of the interest which it inspires is traceable to the imagination.



Sphinx, after Denon.

Nevertheless the physiognomy of this stupendous image has drawn from a recent traveller the following reflections:—"Near the Pyramids, more wondrous and more awful than all else in the land of Egypt, there sits the lonely Sphinx. Comely the creature is, but the comeliness is not of this world; the once-worshipped beast is a deformity and a monster to this generation: and yet you can see that those lips, so thick and heavy, were fashioned according to some ancient mould of beauty—some mould of beauty now forgotten: forgotten, because that Greece drew forth Cytherea from the flashing foam of the Ægean, and in her image created new forms of beauty, and made it a law among men, that the short and proudly-wreathed lip should stand for the sign and the main condition of loveliness, through all generations to come. Yet still there lives on the race of those who were beautiful in the fashion of the elder world; and Christian girls of Coptic blood will look on you with the sad serious gaze, and kiss your charitable hand with the pouting lips of the very Sphinx." *

It is impossible, however, to form any adequate idea of the grandeur of the Sphinx without having recourse to laborious and expensive excavations; for although the imagination may descend through the sand and pursue the dimensions of the statue, it is necessarily checked by the reflection, that it has no certainty to proceed on, and may be dealing with one

* Eothen.

of its own creations while attempting to familiarise itself with a reality. Once, and once only, since the time of the Romans, has this prodigious image been laid bare to its basis. Mr. Salt, while Consul-General of Egypt, and Captain Caviglia, achieved this undertaking; and the account given by the former of their operations is so interesting, that I am tempted to abridge it here :—

This monument, so imposing in its aspect, even in the mutilated state to which it has been reduced, has always excited the admiration of those

The Sphinx laid bare

who possessed sufficient knowledge of art to appreciate its merits at a first glance; for though, to an untutored eye, there remains so little of the features as scarcely to give more than a general idea of the human head, yet, by repeated and accurate observation, the several parts may be sufficiently traced to afford a tolerably complete idea of its original perfection.

The contemplative turn of the eye, the mild expression of the mouth, and the beautiful disposition of the drapery at the angle of the forehead, sufficiently attest the admirable skill of the artist by whom it was executed. It is true that no great attention has been paid to those proportions which we are accustomed to admire, nor does the pleasing impression which it

produces result from any known rule adopted in its execution, but it may rather be attributed to the unstudied simplicity of the conception, to the breadth yet high finish of the several parts, and to the stupendous magnitude of the whole.

Such are the sentiments which a repeated view of this extraordinary work has inspired. At first, I confess, that, like many other travellers, I felt that the praises lavished upon it by Norden, Denon, and by others, were exaggerated; but the more I studied it at different hours of the day, and under different effects of light and of shade, the more I became convinced of their having barely done justice to its merits: it must indeed be allowed, that the drawings by both these gentlemen but faintly accord with their encomiums; but, after having repeated the same task myself with little success, I must admit, that the difficulties which attend the undertaking are sufficient to baffle the efforts of any one not professionally dedicated to the arts.

Before I proceed, I must premise, that the general impression made upon me by this monument, has been produced by a deliberate contemplation of it, when laid open to its base, with the fragments of a beard resting beneath the chin, with its paws stretched fifty feet in advance, and with the temple, the granite tablet, and the altar, represented in the accompanying sketches, spread out on a regular platform in its front. These interesting objects, which no one for ages had had an opportunity of seeing, have undoubtedly tended to exalt it in my estimation; and, in order that I may endeavour to convey something of the same feelings to others, I shall proceed to a detailed account of what was discovered by Captain Caviglia; which, together with the several sketches taken on the spot during the progress of his operations, may remain as a record of his labours, when the objects themselves are destroyed, or again entombed in the moving sands.

From various reports I learned that the French had made a considerable excavation in front of the Sphinx, and that they had just discovered a door when compelled to suspend operations. This account was repeatedly confirmed by the Arabs, several of whom declared that they had been present at the discovery; and said, that the door led into the body of the Sphinx; while others affirmed that it conducted up to the second pyramid. Though little stress could be laid on such statements, they still rendered Captain Caviglia very unwilling to give up his researches, without at least doing all in his power to ascertain the fact.

To this end he first began to open a deep trench on the left, or northern side, opposite the shoulder of the statue; and, though the sand was so loose, that the wind drove back frequently during the night more than half of what had been removed in the day, yet he managed by the aid of planks, arranged so as to support the sides, to dig down in a few days to the base. The trench, however, being no more than twenty feet across at the top, and not above three feet wide at the bottom, the workmen were evidently placed in a dangerous situation; for if any large body of sand had fallen in, it must have smothered those who were employed below. It was, therefore, found necessary to abandon this part of the attempt. By what had been done, however, the height of the statue from the top of the

head to the base was ascertained, and it was also found that the external surface of the body was composed of stones of various sizes, put together with much care. The form of the masonry was not very regular, but it consisted of three successive ledges, sufficiently broad for a man to stand upon, and intended, probably, to represent the folds of a mantle or dress. It seemed to have been added by the Romans.

The result of the first operation not proving satisfactory, Captain Caviglia began a large excavation towards the front, in which he employed, from the beginning of March to the end of June, from sixty to a hundred labourers. Many interesting discoveries were now made. Among other fragments that were found, were portions of the beard of the Sphinx, and the head of a serpent. Most of these lay in a small temple, ten feet long and five feet broad, which was immediately below the chin of the statue, and which contained, according to Pliny, the body of Amasis, the first king of the eighteenth dynasty. Between the front walls of this temple, a small lion of good workmanship was found, with the head towards the image; and, as small statues of the bull Mahdes are similarly placed in Indian temples, I conceive that this statue was in its original position. Fragments of other lions, rudely carved, and the head and shoulders of a Sphinx, were likewise discovered. All these remains, together with certain tablets found in the small temple, the walls, and the platform, had been ornamented with red paint; which colour, according to Pausanias, was appropriated in Egypt, as in India, to sacred purposes.

A large part of the left paw was uncovered, and the platform of masonry was found to extend beyond it. In the course of a fortnight Captain Caviglia had removed the sand from the paw, and from the outer walls of the temple, in front of which was an altar formed of granite. It is now in the British Museum, and has had at the angles projecting stones, which may be supposed to have been called the horns of the altar. This fragment still retains the marks of fire—the effects, probably, of burnt offerings.

Captain Caviglia succeeded in laying open the base of the Sphinx, and in clearing away the sand in front of it, to the extent of more than a hundred feet. Many short Greek inscriptions were indistinctly cut on the paws of the statue. They prove that the image was held in high veneration; confirm the expression of Pliny, "quasi silvestre nemus accolentium;" and contain various phrases, which elucidate many doubtful points in the sculptures of the adjacent tombs.

It is scarcely possible for any person, unused to occupations of this kind, to form an idea of the difficulties which Captain Caviglia had to surmount when working at the depth of the base; for, in spite of all his precautions, the slightest breath of wind or concussion set the surrounding particles of sand in motion, so that the sloping sides crumbled away, and mass after mass tumbled in, till the whole moving surface bore no unapt resemblance to a cascade of water. Even when the sides appeared most firm, if the labourers suspended their work only for an hour, they found that the greater part of their labour had to be renewed. This was particularly the case on the southern side of the right paw, where the people were employed for seven days without making any sensible advance, because the sand rolled

down in one continued and regular torrent as fast as it was removed. He therefore only examined the end of the paw, when an imperfect description was discovered on the second digit, and a few dedicatory phrases, addressed to Harpocrates, Ares, and Hermes. At the distance of about two feet to the southward of the right paw, the platform abruptly terminated. It was therefore supposed that the Sphinx was placed upon a pedestal; but, by extending the operations in front of the statue, the platform was found to be continued, and the steps were discovered. They were bounded on each side by walls formed of unburnt brick, like those which enclosed the ancient cities and temples of Egypt. The inner sides of the walls, nearest the steps, were lined with stone, and coated with plaster; the stonework, however, appeared comparatively modern, for upon several of the blocks were the remains of Greek inscriptions, which alluded to other buildings. Another of the inscriptions recorded repairs, which were performed by the orders of Antoninus, and of Verus. The walls appeared to branch off towards the north, and also towards the south, and to form a large enclosure around the Sphinx; but their direction was not ascertained. The steps, about a foot in breadth and eight inches in height, were thirty in number. They ended abruptly on the northern side, so as to leave a passage between them and the wall. This passage was not examined. On a stone platform, at the top of the steps, was a small building, which, from its construction, and from various inscriptions found near it, seemed to have been a station whence the emperors, and other persons of distinction who visited the Pyramids, could witness the religious ceremonies performed at the altar below. An inscription on the front of it was much worn.

The platform above the steps was of narrower dimensions, and the abutments had a theatrical appearance. In a few days another flight of thirteen steps was discovered, and another small building, which appeared by the inscription to have been erected under the Emperor Septimius Severus; and the name of Geta is erased from the inscription, in the same manner as it has been taken from the inscription upon the triumphal arch at Rome. At this place, another inscription on a stele, erected in the reigns of Marcus Antoninus and of Lucius Verus, was found; it was sent to the British Museum, and recorded that the walls were restored on the 15th of Pachon, (10th of May,) in the sixth year of the reign of the Emperors Antoninus and Verus. From these facts, and many others to which we might refer, it appears that the Romans were at considerable pains to preserve the sacred monuments of the countries they conquered. In this they set us an example which we should do well to follow. The Taj Mahal, indeed, and one or two other great monuments, are preserved at the public expense in India; but others, equally interesting, are suffered to go to decay, and to have the operations of time accelerated by ignorance and barbarism.

At the top of the second flight of steps a platform is carried on with a gradual ascent, to the length of 135 feet, bounded by a wall on the southern side till it arrives nearly at the level of the ground, when the rock rapidly descends towards the Nile, whether or not in the form of

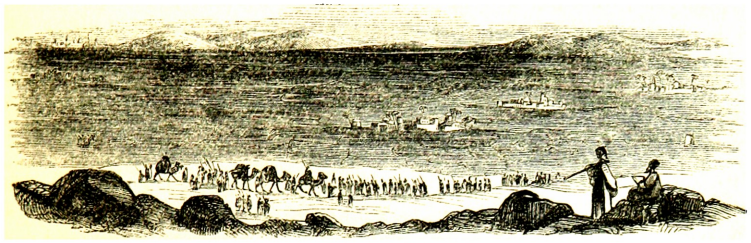
steps was not discovered. It is difficult to convey, even by drawings, a distinct idea of this approach to the Sphinx. It was impossible, however, to conceive anything more imposing than the general effect; or better calculated to set off to advantage the grandeur of the enormous monument, particularly in the evening, when the sun was setting behind it. The spectator advanced on a level with the breast, and thereby witnessed the full effect of that admirable expression of countenance, which characterises the features, whilst, as he descended the successive flights of stairs, the stupendous image rose before him, whilst his view was confined, by the walls on either side, to the interesting object, for the contemplation of which, even when he had reached the bottom of the steps, a sufficient space was allowed for him to comprehend the whole at a single glance.

Entrance to Sepulchral Chamber near Sphinx.

Such was the result of Captain Caviglia's exertions in June, when, in consequence of exposing himself too much to the sun, he was unfortunately seized by an attack of ophthalmia, that compelled him to suspend his operations, and shortly afterwards to return to take charge of his ship at Alexandria. It is, perhaps, a circumstance unexampled in Mohammedan countries, that these operations should have been carried on by a single individual, attended occasionally only by one soldier, without the slightest molestation having been offered, or unpleasant circumstance having occurred, notwithstanding that numerous parties of idle soldiers went every day to inspect the excavation, and that thousands of Arabs, during part of the time, were encamped in the neighbourhood; the circumstance unquestionably does honour to the government of Mohammed Ali, who, on this occasion, as well as on many others, has shown a remarkable liberality in facilitating the researches carried on by Europeans in any way connected with science. The whole expense of these operations amounted to about 18,000 piastres (£450); "and I have to add," says Col. Vyse, "that Captain Caviglia, to whom by our engagement was left the disposal of everything that might be discovered, very handsomely requested me to forward the whole, of what I might think interesting, to the British Museum, as a testimony of his attachment to our country, under the flag of which he had for some years sailed."*

* Col. Howard Vyse.

The rocky eminence upon which Cheops and his successors erected their vast pyramidal temples to Venus, rises about one hundred feet above the



Panoramic View of the Plain of Gizeh.

level of the Egyptian plain, and has now been covered, by the action of the west wind, with sandy mounds, various in form and height, which cause it to exhibit a ruggedness of aspect altogether congruous with our ideas of the Libyan waste. When we had gained the summit of this height, and cleared the hillocks which at first obstructed our view, all the sublimity of the Pyramids burst at once upon us. The tallest among our companions, standing at their feet, were scarcely so high as a single layer of stones; and when I drew near and beheld the mighty basis, the vast breadth, the prodigious solidity, the steep acclivity of the sides, misleading the eye, which appears to discover the summit among the clouds, whilst the kite and the eagle, wheeling round and round, far, far aloft, were yet not so high as the apex, I secretly acknowledged the justice of the popular opinion which enumerates those majestic structures among the wonders of the world. Here, then, after many disappointments and hopes frequently deferred, I at length stood, realising, by the indulgence of Providence, one of the long cherished schemes of my youth. Nor did the pleasure fall short a jot of the measure of delight promised at a distance by hope. Genius of the first order had reared these Titanian temples, and so thoroughly did it succeed in embodying its vast conceptions, that men the most illiterate, and of the grossest apprehension, contemplating these mysterious fanes, have their minds penetrated and warmed into admiration by a spark of enthusiasm, an involuntary consciousness of the sublime. Less than these it was impossible I should feel. Pythagoras, Plato, Herodotus, Germanicus had gone of old on the same pilgrimage, and though I may never share their renown, not one of them all could have experienced more pleasurable emotions, or sympathised more earnestly with the unknown architect in the glorious triumph of his intellect. Men, ambitious of the reputation of philosophers, have declaimed in all ages about the inutility of the Pyramids. But can anything be called useless by which the mind is elevated and aggrandised? which rouses and fires the imagination with ideas of diuturnity and grandeur and power? What are we, divested of the pleasures furnished by the imagination? Why has Art in all ages mimicked the creative energy of Nature? Is it not that we may remove from ourselves that sense of insignificance which is inspired by the feebleness of our physical power, by

the exertion of another power, in which it would appear from many of the works of men that we are not deficient! However this may be, I thanked Cheops, Cephrenes, and Mycerinus for creating a marvel in the regions of art, and thus, whatever may be pretended to the contrary, adding to the sum of permanent enjoyment. If in the execution of their designs they oppressed their subjects, the fact is to be lamented; but too many modern princes, with equal recklessness of what they inflict upon the people, wantonly engage in wars which still more lavishly and uselessly exhaust their treasures, without producing anything for the instruction or gratification of posterity.

Proceeding with our guides to the entrance, which is the common point of departure, whether we mount to the top or descend into the interior, we selected two Arabs, to aid us in running along the narrow ledges, and passing over the dangerous projections and angles, and forthwith began to ascend. At first it must be owned "the way seemed difficult and steep to climb," but as we proceeded and rose from one of the Bomidai (as the steps are aptly termed by Herodotus) to another, you gradually become familiar with your position and learn to be bold. Our track lay along the north-eastern angle, where time and the irresistible storms which sweep across the desert have tumbled down many of the stones; and thus made, at various heights, resting-places for the traveller. And indeed such resting-places are exceedingly necessary; for the exertion and labour of the ascent, with the impatience which animates most persons on such occasions, soon put you out of breath, and make you glad to sit down from time to time, to contemplate what you have already achieved. Looking upward along the face of the Pyramid the steps, like those of the visionary ladder of Padan-aram, seem to ascend to the clouds; and if you turn your eyes below, the height looks dizzy, prodigious, fearful, and the people at the bottom appear to be shrunk to dwarfs. The prospect of the country enlarges at every step; the breadth of the Pyramid sensibly diminishes; and at length after considerable toil you find yourself on the small table land which Vandalism, or the premature death of the original builder, has left upon the top of the Great Pyramid. A number of large blocks of an unfinished layer occupy a portion of the square area, and serve the traveller (or at least served me) as a desk to write on. They are covered with the names of innumerable visitors of all nations cut deep in the stone; but I saw none to which any great celebrity is attached.

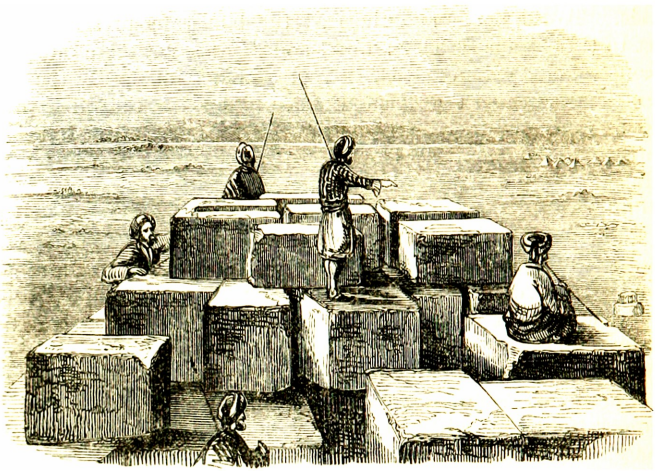
It was now about mid-day, and the sun, entirely free from clouds, smote upon the Pyramid with great vehemence; so that, what with the warmth produced by the labour of the ascent and the ardour of its rays, we experienced a heat resembling that of an oven. The air was clear, and our view unimpeded on all sides. To the south, scattered in irregular groups, were the Pyramids of Sakkarah, Abousir, and Dashour, glittering in the sun, like enormous tents; and appearing from their number, and the confusion of their arrangement, to extend to an unknown distance into the desert. On the west was the wilderness of Libya, stretching away to the edge of the horizon; arid, undulating, boundless, apparently destitute of the very principle of vegetation, an eternal prey to the sand-storm and the whirl-

wind. A flock of gazelles, or a troop of Bedouins scouring across the plain, would have relieved its monotony; but neither the one nor the other appeared. In the foreground the sand of various colours, yellow, dusky brown, and gray, swelled into hillocks which looked like the nuclei of new pyramids. To the north and the east the landscape presented a perfect contrast to this savage scenery: night and day are not more different; and if the contests of Typhon and Osiris represented symbolically the struggles between the desert and the river—the one to nourish, the other to destroy—the gods were still there, drawn up in battle array against each other; though the evil demon, alas! had evidently long prevailed, and was daily curtailing the empire of his adversary. All, however, that remains of the valley of the Nile is luxuriantly covered with verdure and beauty; corn-fields, green meadows, woods of various growth and foliage, scattered villages, a thousand shining sheets of water, and, above all, the broad glittering stream of the Nile spreading fertility on all sides like a god. Beyond this were the white buildings of Cairo, Babylon, and Rhodah, backed by the long lofty range of the Gebel Mokattam, reflecting the bright warm rays of the mid-day sun.

We remained for some time on the summit of the Pyramid, as if loth to quit the spot, admiring with unwearied delight the extraordinary features of the landscape beneath, but it at length became necessary to descend. When I approached the edge of the platform, and looked down the steep rugged side of the Pyramid (a slope of nearly eight hundred feet), I no longer wondered at the accident which caused the death of poor Maze, who, as some persons in Egypt suppose, threw himself purposely down, from the same motive which impelled Eratostratos to destroy the Temple of Diana at Ephesos. But the accident may very well be accounted for without this supposition; in fact, the wonder is, that such things should not frequently happen. Hasselquist, we know, failed twice in his attempt to reach the top; the first time because he feared that the high wind then blowing would have hurled him down; the second, because the steps had been so intensely heated by the sun that they burned his feet through his boots. We descended rapidly. I had an Arab on either hand, who actively assisted me, springing from step to step with the agility of a chamois. It was now that the height looked pernicious, the blocks on which we stood vast, and the labour that had piled them upon each other marvellous; but we reached the bottom in perfect safety, in one-twentieth part of the time it had taken us to ascend.

It is generally supposed that the whole of this part of the desert is so completely sterile, that no plant of any kind will grow in it, and its appearance certainly suggests so much. But an attentive naturalist may discover even here proofs that no part of God's creation is entirely destitute of the principle of life. One solitary plant, the gum succori, and more than one species of animal, were found in the sand by Hasselquist; and perhaps if a diligent search were made, other individuals of both kingdoms might present themselves. The small lizard, common in the Levant, where it may be beheld gliding like a little shadow along the faces of houses, garden-walls, or ruins, nestles in the burning hollows at the foot of the Pyramids,

subsisting on heaven knows what. Its neighbour in these solitudes is the lion-ant, which, guided by instinct, erects, on the shifting surface of the



Top of the Great Pyramid.

waste, structures which, though infinitesimally small, rival the Pyramids themselves in subtle contrivance and ingenuity. They are probably the only republicans in this part of the world, who, setting sultan and pasha at defiance, have erected their well-ordered commonwealth in sight of the immemorial hot-bed of despotism. They may generally be seen travelling in great numbers upon the sand, each holding a morsel of stone or a rotten bit of wood between his curious jaws, and hastening with it to the dwellings which they have made for themselves in the ground. I saw numbers of this insect's nests. They were thrown up in tufts in the sand, about the size of the two fists, and slightly depressed at the top. In the middle of this depression was a little hole, no larger than a pipe stem, through which they went in and out. I attacked them within their entrenchments in hopes of seeing the inward construction of their nests, but I was deceived, and only demolished their outworks, from which went a private passage, so artfully conducted, that it was vain to endeavour to come to their innermost dwelling. All the architecture, magnificence, and expense, displayed in the Pyramids, cannot give a contemplater of nature such high ideas, as the art of these little creatures can excite.*

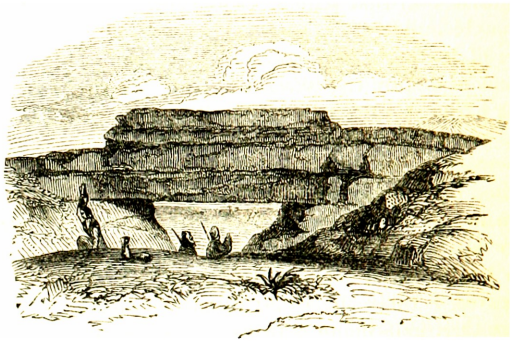
Strabo, who visited this spot eighteen hundred years ago, after having described somewhat too concisely the grandeur and mechanism of the Pyramids, speaks of certain curious petrifactions discovered in the mounds scattered here and there around their bases. His relation has given rise to much discussion among the learned. He observed, he says, in the

* Hasselquist.

heaps formed by the chippings of the stone used in erecting the vast structures near at hand, multitudes of small pebbles, in form and size resembling a lentil. It would have been altogether an extraordinary thing had the Egyptians failed to have a legend associated with these petrifactions: they informed him that they were so many relics of the food with which the old pyramid builders had sustained themselves, then, as now, consisting in great part of lentils. By some, however, the pebbles were thought to be like grains of dhoura imperfectly hulled. I say dhoura, for the idea of Greaves, that barley is meant by Strabo, seems to me extremely erroneous. Strabo was not at all indisposed to accept the marvellous interpretation of the Egyptians, though by what agency lentils could, in such a situation, be turned into stone, it would be difficult to comprehend. Besides, he had seen in his own country an abundance of pebbles similar in shape and dimensions, and he remarks that everywhere along the sea-shore, and along the banks of rivers, an abundance of such pebbles may be met with. Greaves, because he could discover none of these relics himself, appears more than half inclined to call in question Strabo's veracity; though, on second thoughts, he confesses it to be probable that the sands of the desert may, in process of time, have buried the heaps of stones which the Greek geographer saw. He then, by way of illustration, repeats certain superstitious stories, curious enough in themselves, and characteristic of Oriental credulity, though not, perhaps, strictly appropriate in the place they occupy: "Were not Strabo a writer of much gravity and judgment, I should suspect that these petrified grains (though I know such petrifactions to be no impossibility in nature; for I have seen, at Venice, the bones and flesh of a man, and the whole head, except the teeth, entirely transmuted into stone; and at Rome, clear conduit water, by long standing in aqueducts, hath been turned into perfect alabaster) are like those loaves which are reported to be found by the Red Sea, converted into stone, and by the inhabitants supposed to be some of the bread the Israelites left behind them, when they passed over for fear of Pharaoh. They are sold at Grand Cairo handsomely made up in the manner of the bread of these times, which is enough to discover the imposture. For the Scripture makes them to have been unleavened cakes; 'They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt.' Or else Strabo's relation may be like the tradition of the rising of dead men's bones every year in Egypt; a thing superstitiously believed by the Christians, and by the priests, either out of ignorance, or policy, maintained as an argument of the resurrection. Sandys, in his travels, writes that they are seen to rise on Good Friday. A Frenchman at Grand Cairo, who had been present at the resurrection, showed me an arm which he had brought from thence; the flesh shrivelled up and dried like that of the mummies. He observed the miracle to have been always behind him; once casually looking back, he discovered some bones carried privately by an Egyptian, under his vest, whereby he understood the mystery."

Diodorus, describing the environs of the Pyramids, obliterates all trace of the mounds noticed by Strabo. He observes that no marks of human labour were anywhere discoverable, no fragments of stone, no rubbish,

nothing but the sandy level of the wilderness, and the towering monuments of Egyptian magnificence, springing out of it as though they had been placed there entire by the hand of some divinity. The Roman naturalist, always ready to be carried away by a striking idea, adopts the representation of Diodorus, in which he has been imitated by some modern writers, who, from this circumstance, seem to infer that Strabo's mounds were imaginary. The slightest familiarity, however, with the Libyan Desert ought to have suggested a different conclusion. Nothing is there more common than the shifting of sand-heaps, which to-day perhaps, in certain localities, may rise to the elevation of hills, while the whirlwind of to-morrow may carry them away, and leave the stony skeleton of the earth stripped as it were of its integuments.

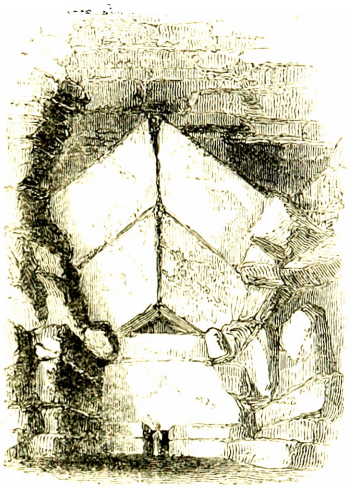


Bridge in Southern Dyke.

Before we enter the Pyramids, it may not be wholly without interest to consider what the writers of the nation which now possesses the country think of the origin and purpose of those mysterious structures. Many strange theories have obtained currency in Europe upon this subject. They have been tombs, and temples, and I know not what besides. Among the ancient Sabæans they were regarded as objects of mysterious reverence; the professors of that religion proceeded from Mesopotamia on pilgrimage to the Pyramids, conceiving, probably, that they had some talismanic connection with the celestial spheres. The imagination of the wildest speculators amongst us has fallen far short of the notions suggested to the Orientals by the sublimity of these buildings. "The greatest part of chronologers agree," say they, "that he who built the Pyramids was Saurid Ibn Salhouk, King of Egypt, who lived three hundred years before the flood. The occasion of this was, because he saw in his sleep, that the whole earth was turned over, with the inhabitants of it, the men lying upon their faces, and the stars falling down, and striking one another with a terrible noise; and being troubled, he concealed it. After this he saw the fixed stars falling to the earth, in the similitude of white fowl; and they snatched up men, carrying them between the great mountains; and these mountains closed upon them, and the shining stars were made dark. Awaking with great fear, he assembled the chief priests of all the provinces of Egypt, an hundred and thirty priests; the chief of them was called Aclimum. Relating the whole matter to them, they took the altitude of the stars, and, making their prognostications, foretold of a deluge. The King said, 'Will it come to our country?' They answered, 'Yea, and will

destroy it.' And there remained a certain number of years for to come, and he commanded in the mean space to build the Pyramids, and a vault to be made, into which the river Nilus entering, should run into the countries of the West, and into the land Al-Said; and he filled them with telesmes, and with strange things, and with riches and treasure, and the like. He engraved in them all things that were told him by wise men, as also all profound sciences, the names of alakakirs, the uses and hurts of them; the science of astrology, and of arithmetic, and of geometry, and of physic. All this may be interpreted by him that knows the characters and language. After he had given orders for this building, they cut out vast columns, and wonderful stones. They fetched massive stones from the Ethiopians, and made with these the foundation of the three Pyramids, fastening them together with lead and iron. They built the gates of them forty cubits under ground, and they made the height of the Pyramids an hundred royal cubits, which are fifty of ours in these times; he also made each side of them an hundred royal cubits. The beginning of this building was in a fortunate horoscope. After that he had finished it, he covered it with coloured satin from the top to the bottom; and he appointed a solemn festival, at which were present all the inhabitants of his kingdom. Then he built in the western Pyramid thirty treasuries, filled with store of riches and utensils, and with signatures made of precious stones, and with instruments of iron, and vessels of earth, and with arms which rust not, and with glass, which might be bended and yet not broken, and with strange spells, and with several kinds of alakakirs, single and double, and with deadly poisons, and with other things besides. He made, also, in the east Pyramid, divers celestial spheres and stars, and what they severally operate, in their aspects, and the perfumes which are to be used to them, and the books which treat of these matters. He also put in the coloured Pyramid the commentaries of the priests, in chests of black marble, and with every priest a book in which were the wonders of his profession, and of his actions, and of his nature, and what was done in his time; and what is, and what shall be, from the beginning of time to the end of it. He placed in every Pyramid a treasurer; the treasurer of the westerly Pyramid was a statue of marblestone, standing upright, with a lance, and, upon his head, a serpent wreathed. Those that came near it, and stood still, the serpent bit of one side, and, wreathing round about his throat, and killing him, returned to his place. He made the treasurer of the east Pyramid an idol of black agate, his eyes open and shining, sitting upon a throne, with a lance; when any looked upon him, he heard of one side a voice, which took away his sense, so that he fell prostrate upon his face, and ceased not till he died. He made the treasurer of the coloured Pyramid a statue of stone, called Albut, sitting; he which looked towards it was drawn by the statue till he stuck to it, and could not be separated from it till such time as he died. The Coptites write in their books, that there is an inscription engraven upon them, the exposition of which in Arabic is this: 'I, King Saurid, built the Pyramids in such and such a time, and finished them in six years. He that comes after me, and says that he is equal to me, let him destroy them in six hundred years; and yet it is

known, that it is easier to pluck down than to build up. I also covered them, when I had finished them, with satin; and let him cover them with mats.' After that Almamon the Caliph entered Egypt, and saw the Pyramids, he desired to know what was within, and therefore would have them opened. They told him it could not possibly be done. He replied, I will have it certainly done. And that hole was opened for him, which stands open to this day, with fire and vinegar. The smiths prepared and sharpened the iron and engines which they forced in; and there was a great expense in the opening of it. The thickness of the wall was found to be twenty cubits. And when they came to the end of the wall behind the place they had digged, there was an ewer of green emerald; in it were a thousand dinars, very weighty; every dinar was an ounce of our ounces: they wondered at it, but knew not the meaning of it. Then Almamon said, 'Cast up the account, how much hath been spent in making the entrance.' They cast it up, and, lo, it was the same sum which they found; it neither exceeded, nor was defective. Within they discovered a square well, in the square of it there were doors; every door opened into an house or vault, in which there were dead bodies wrapped up in linen. They found, towards the top of the Pyramid, a chamber, in which there was a hollow stone; in it was a statue of stone like a man, and within it a man, upon whom was a breastplate of gold, set with jewels: upon his breast was a stone of incalculable price, and at his head a carbuncle of the bigness of an egg, shining like the light of the day; and upon him were characters written with a pen; no man knows what they signify. After Almamon had opened it, men entered into it for many years, and descended by the slippery passage which is in it; and some of them came out safe, and others died."



Entrance to the Great Pyramid.

We now propose to descend into the interior chambers. The entrance, which is in the northern face of the Pyramid, about forty feet above the level of the Desert, and equidistant from either side, is approached over an artificial elevation of the soil. The heat and closeness being very great within, we partly undressed, and leaving behind us our superfluous garments, each person took a lighted taper and followed his Arab guide, who, accustomed to the place, crept down the slippery passage like a cat; but raised in his progress such clouds of dust, that I considered myself fortunate in being the foremost of the party. The passage, which dips at an angle of twenty-six degrees, is entirely cased with slabs of oriental porphyry,

finely polished, and so exquisitely fitted to each other as to seem but one piece.

When we reached the mouth of the well, we quickly discovered that the precaution we had taken of bringing a good quantity of cord had not been useless. There are indeed some steps, or rather holes, on both sides of the shaft; but they are broken in many places, and so worn throughout, that to trust to them would most certainly be to put one's neck in danger of dislocation. To avoid so fatal a catastrophe, I tied the cord round my body. Before descending, I let down a lantern by a piece of twine. When it reached the bottom, I prepared to follow. Two servants and three Arabs held the rope which was attached to me, though with evident reluctance, for they wished me to relinquish the hazardous undertaking. They did all in their power to frighten me, expatiating on the dangers I ran, and averring, "that there were spirits below, from whose clutches I should never escape." When they saw, however, that I was resolved to rush upon my ruin, and that their remonstrances only made me laugh, they consented to hold the rope, and contented themselves with deploring my sad fate, and looking upon me as if it was to be for the last time. At length, after having provided myself with paper, a compass, a measure, and a candle in my hand, I began to descend, sometimes trusting to the rope, sometimes to the steps, until I had reached the bottom of the first well. The opening at this place is towards the south, and leads into a passage about eight feet long, after which there is a perpendicular descent of four feet. Four feet and ten inches from this there is another well, or rather a continuation of the same. The entrance is almost blocked up by a huge stone, leaving only a small aperture, through which it is somewhat difficult to pass. I now again let down the lantern, not only that I might see my way, but also to discover whether or not the air was mephitic. On this occasion, however, the precaution was of no avail; because this well is not, like the other, an exact perpendicular, but a little crooked, so that when I had let down the light I could no longer see it. But this did not discourage me. I was determined to descend as far as I could go; there was no other way of satisfying my curiosity. I now found it necessary to have some one to hold the rope at the mouth of the second well, as well as at the first, and I accordingly called two of the Arabs who were above; but, instead of coming, they began to relate a thousand stories to excuse themselves; among others that of a Frank, who some years ago coming to the place where I then was, and having let down a long cord to ascertain the depth, had it snatched from his hands by some demon. I knew very well to whom they were indebted for this story; for the Dutch Consul swears that the thing happened to himself. There is only one way of dealing with such folks—I mean the Arabs. I promised money to the first who would come, and besides that the treasure, if there really was one below, as they pretended, should be all for him. This last observation had its weight; all conceived some desire to brave the dangers of the well; but no sooner had one begun to descend than superstition overcame him, and he drew back in a state of great trepidation. I was not in a mood, or in a place, highly conducive to

patience. I bawled for a long time in bad Arabic without producing any effect, and was at length about to give up the attempt in despair, when the love of money overcame the superstitious fear of one of the Arabs, and he began to descend, though with manifest signs of repugnance. It was easy to see that he did not come down with all his heart. He was in such a state of agitation that he did not know what he was doing. He passed his trembling hand over the wall without being able for a long time to find the holes which were to assist him. I, accordingly, judging it not safe to remain directly under him, retired towards the other well. When he reached the bottom, he seemed more like a spectre than a man. Pale and trembling, he cast furtive glances on every side. His hair, if he had had any, would have stood upright on his head.

I hastened to go down lest I might give him time to repent of what he had done. I had the rope still tied round my waist. I soon discovered the lantern far below me, which showed that this well was deeper than the former. A little lower than the middle I perceived the entrance of a grotto, about fifteen feet deep by four or five wide, for it is not regular, and high enough to allow of my walking upright. From thence I descended to the entrance of a third well, which is not perpendicular, like the others, and whose slope is very rapid. I found it was of great depth by rolling a stone down. I called out to the Arabs to slacken the rope by degrees until I told them to pull, and dropping the lantern before me as I went, descended as well as I could, putting my feet in the little holes which had been cut in the sides. I continued following the lantern for a long time without perceiving any sign of a termination to this horrible place. I was proceeding in a perfectly straight line, when suddenly the well became perpendicular, and shortly afterwards I reached the bottom. It is choked up with stones, sand, &c. I had here only two things to fear; first, that the bats should fly against my candle and extinguish it, and second, that the great stone, of which I have spoken at the entrance of the second well, and upon which the Arab was obliged to lean his whole weight, should fall forward and shut me down where I was for ever. It is certainly very fine to say that I ought to have considered it an honour to be buried in a pyramid, in one of the famous monuments which were destined only for kings. I candidly acknowledge that I had no ambition that way. On the contrary, I was a thousand times more glad to emerge into air and daylight, than I should have been at being buried alive in so remarkable a place. I found a rope-ladder at the bottom of the second well, which, though it had lain there many years, was as fresh and strong as when it was first made. The rounds were of wood. It was left by a traveller who attempted to descend where I now was, but who did not go further than the grotto. It was on this occasion that the Dutch Consul averred that some one below had snatched the cord out of his hands, a relation of which the Arabs preserve every circumstance recorded in their memories. By means of my rope we succeeded in bringing up the ladder, though with some difficulty, because the second well is, as I have said, somewhat crooked, and the wooden pieces caught every now and then in the holes in the sides. When we reached the bottom of the first well

our candle fell and was extinguished, upon which my poor Arab gave himself up for lost. He seized the rope when I attempted to ascend, and protested that he would rather I should blow his brains out than be left down alone in company with the Efreets. I accordingly allowed him to mount first, for which he seemed very grateful. Although it is much more difficult to ascend than to descend, I don't know how it was, but he got up a hundred times quicker than he came down.

When I issued from this extraordinary place I was as black as a smith, and my clothes, it will easily be believed, had not benefited by the rough usage they had met with. The first well is twenty-two feet in depth, the second twenty-nine, and the third ninety-nine; which, with the descent of five feet between the first and second wells, makes a total of one hundred and fifty-five.*

We now proceeded to the adit leading to the King's Chamber. This narrow, smooth corridor, which mounts with a steep ascent, is cased, like the former, with porphyry. We passed over the mouth of the entrance to the Queen's Chamber, which lies directly under that of the King. Notches cut in the pavement enabled us to fix our footsteps; and after groping along for a considerable time, through dust and heat, we arrived at a level passage of no great length, which led directly into the royal chamber.

Here our tapers, though numerous, at first seemed inadequate to the lighting up of the apartment; but our eyes by degrees began to pierce through the gloom, and to discover the form and dimensions of objects. The mysterious sarcophagus, which, in my opinion, was never meant to contain the bones of any mortal, is placed with its head turned to the north, the sacred quarter, towards which the fables and traditions of all ancient nations point as to the birth-place of their ancestors. It has been much injured; the cover has been removed, and it is more than half-filled with dust and fragments of sandstone. In the southern wall of the apartment there is a small niche, which may have contained a mimic coffin during the celebration of the mysteries; but it is now empty. The pavement is covered with dust. The walls are beautifully coated with square slabs of polished granite, exquisitely joined. The ceiling is formed of a number of blocks of stone, about three feet in breadth, which reach across the apartment; and being alternately of a lighter and darker grain, give the roof the appearance of being painted in broad stripes of different colours. We found the length of the apartment to be above thirty-nine feet, the breadth about eighteen, and the height about twenty-two. In the northwest corner there were two small square cavities sunk in the floor, and probably of great depth; but they were now nearly filled up with dust. Their use we could not conjecture. Before we left this apartment, a small pistol was fired off. The sound, which seemed louder than that of a cannon, almost rent the drum of the ear; and went on rolling through the Pyramid, as if multiplied by a thousand echoes. Indeed, the interior of these mysterious structures doubtless contains innumerable undiscovered chambers and passages; and, as I listened to the sound, it seemed to sink or mount from cavity to cavity; to rebound repeatedly from obstructing walls; to divide;

* Davison.

to be multiplied, and at length to die away in distant vaults. If this was fancy, it produced at the time all the effect of reality; and I am not sorry to find that this idea has likewise occurred to others, and that subsequent researches have proved its correctness.* The Queen's apartment, to which we now descended, is considerably smaller than that of the King; and the ceiling rises to a point in the middle, like the inside of the roof of an European house. Being ignorant when we left Cairo that the Bedouins had destroyed the wooden staircase, by which travellers used to ascend into what is commonly called "Davison's Chamber," we had come unprepared with a ladder, and our guides were unable to supply the deficiency. As, moreover, the greater part of the day was spent, it would have been too late to remedy the evil by searching for a ladder among the distant villages.

Sepulchral Chamber in Third Pyramid.

The heat in the interior is very great; the big drops of perspiration stood upon our faces like peas; and when we emerged into the open air, our heavy cloaks could scarcely enable us to bear the change of temperature, even in the sunshine.

We dined in the rocky chambers in the eastern face of the hill; after which I quitted the party, and returned alone to explore the numerous sepulchral chambers which here occupy the skirts of the Desert. I found the whole surface of the ground, east of the Pyramid of Cheops, strewed with Egyptian pebbles, or agates, of which I picked up several. I likewise took three small pieces of calcareous stone from the Pyramid itself; together with a little of the mortar, of a pale pink colour, in which the stones were imbedded. Now the vast structure presented itself to my mind in all its grandeur. I stood by it alone. Neither noise, nor laughter, nor contests with the Bedouins, disturbed me. No living thing was anywhere to be seen, save the eagle of the Desert, which wheeled and floated in the sunshine, far aloft towards the alpine summit. Below and all around were tombs and absolute stillness. I wandered to the mouth of the second Pyramid. The entrance, like the other, is cased with beautiful porphyry; but having no light, I could not descend into the interior. The space between the two larger of these structures seems unquestionably to be traversed by covered passages; and judging by the sounds which the earth returned to my footsteps, I thought I could

* See Colonel Vyse's "Operations," &c.

reckon at least four or five. When I had been here some time, I heard the shout of Arabs at a distance; and soon afterwards saw my guides running towards me across the sand, which here seems to be entirely formed of the crumbling particles of the Pyramids. As what I had given them appeared liberal payment in their eyes, they were desirous of manifesting their gratitude, by showing me a shorter way across the plain than the one by which we had come; and ran with much glee by the side of my donkey, until I requested them to return to their village.

As the evening drew near, the air was richly scented by the odour of numerous bean-fields in full blossom. In recrossing the Nile, from Ghizeh to Old Cairo, the scene was beautiful beyond description. The sun, just as we embarked on the river, was setting behind the Pyramids and the Desert; and the summits of the woods, the tombs, the minarets, and other lofty objects, were relieved against a sky of the richest hues. The firmament, on the edge of the horizon, was of a deep tawny-orange colour, which, growing paler as it ascended, appeared, a little higher, to change into a light green; and this again, in its turn, growing less and less intense towards the summit of the vast arch which it described, terminated in a lovely purple flush, which diffused its brilliance over the whole circle of the hemisphere. The moon, calmly rising in the east, threw its soft rays over a portion of the river; while, on the other hand, the indescribably beautiful purple, and pink, and green, and gold of the sky, were reflected from the surface of the water, which, when slightly ruffled by the motion of the boat, or the dip of the oar, shone and glistened like a metallic sea. In the back-ground, towards the east, the naked rocks of the Gebel Mokattam were painted with the most gorgeous hues by the setting sun, which seemed to convert its rude pinnacles into masses of lapis lazuli, turquoises, and amethysts. But, had I the pen of Milton, or the pencil of Claude, I should despair of imparting to others a just conception of that sunset, which I never, but once in Upper Egypt, saw surpassed. It was quite dark when we reached Cairo.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HAJ ESCORT.—HORSEMANSHIP.—THE VIRGIN'S TREE.—HELIOPOLIS.

ANOTHER of the attractions which exist in the neighbourhood of Cairo, is the site of Heliopolis. To this I paid my visit in the spring, under the exhilarating influence of the returning sun, when the face of nature throughout Egypt is most lovely, and when persons in robust health enjoy a flow of animal spirits indescribably delightful. Both sacred and profane traditions impel the traveller to make this excursion. Heliopolis, now Matarea, was the On of the Scriptures; but its principal charm to me consisted in the fact—for as such I regard it—that the feet of the Virgin had rested there, and that the glory of Christ had illuminated it. Few places consequently on the earth are so holy beyond the precincts of Pales-

tine; and to me these were the outworks of that land, which I did not visit, hallowed by the cycle of Gospel events.

As the road leading to Heliopolis lay over the extensive sandy plain, north-east of Cairo, stretching from the city to the mountains,—where at this time the military escort, designed to protect the pilgrim caravan in its march across the Arabian desert towards Mekka, was encamped—we deviated a little from our course in order to observe the tents and equipments of this diminutive host. Though the number of the soldiers was small, the whole *matériel* of the scene—tents, horses, furniture, arms, all in their form and appearance Oriental—presented an aspect highly striking and characteristic. On the countenance of every individual the marks of having braved the sun and scorching blasts of the deserts were deeply engraved. They were mostly veterans; men who, in the numerous shocks and vicissitudes of life, had been entirely emancipated from the ingenuous prejudices of youth, from the influence of ardent enthusiasm, from the love of adventure, from the passion for distinction, all now replaced by that valour generated by continual exposure to danger. To behold this camp, and not to feel the desire to accompany it in its perilous marches over the sandy plains of Arabia, was impossible. In a few days it would be in motion, at the head of many thousand pilgrims, who had already, in their advance to the Holy City, traversed the greatest part of the African continent, from beyond Fez and Morocco; and, had fortune permitted, nothing could have been more flattering to my imagination than to have joined this vast body of enthusiasts, penetrated with them through the indescribable paths of the Wilderness, and contemplated their wild but pious exercises at the birth-place and tomb of their Prophet. The tents of the common soldiers and inferior officers were white, and of the ordinary form; but those of the commander and treasurer of the troops, who probably claimed a descent from Mohammed, were of a light leaf-green colour, and most elegantly fashioned. Numerous horses, several of them of rare beauty, were picketed in the usual manner on the plain, eating corn, in the London fashion, from small bags suspended on their noses; while their owners, in the gorgeous costume and sparkling decorations of the Egyptian cavalry, were sauntering idly through the camp. Formerly it would have been highly imprudent in a traveller to venture among these fanatical Moslems, who, when preparing to visit their holy places, seem to have been animated by a double portion of the spirit of persecution. The ordonnances and example of the Pasha have effected a wonderful change in these matters: and whatever may have been the secret feelings with which they beheld us ride among their tents, and scrutinise their horses, accoutrements, and arms, their behaviour manifested no disposition to insolence, but rather a desire to exhibit to the best advantage all the politeness they were masters of. Supposing that all Englishmen, since they are admirers of horses, must necessarily be proficients in the veterinary art, they did us the honour to consult our judgment respecting the various ailments of their beasts, several of which they said had for three days rejected their food, while others ate a great deal without getting fat. In some of these cases we prescribed bleeding, in others physic; but they

appeared to entertain a horror of Caireen phlebotomists; and were evidently inclined, after all, to trust the whole affair to nature. Meanwhile, one of those who possessed healthy steeds, mounted, in order to amuse us with some of the singular feats of Turkish horsemanship; he wheeled, he curvetted, he stopped his courser in mid-gallop; but in exhibitions of this kind the Turks fall short, perhaps, of the old Memlook cavaliers in boldness and dexterity.

These celebrated horsemen were all admirably disciplined according to their peculiar system, which included exhibitions of skill better suited to Astley's theatre than a field of battle. They were taught to stand upright on a swift horse, and even on two, running side by side, and in that position to discharge arrows in all directions. It was also their custom to ride with two swords fixed in their saddle, one pointing to their back, the other to their abdomen; so that on the slightest awkwardness one of these might pierce them. Others lay on their backs upon the fleetest horses, discharging their arrows as the animals galloped along. Volney describes the exercises of the Memlooks of a later period, in which fire-arms were substituted for the bow. They assembled every morning in a plain near Cairo, and there acccustomed themselves, while on full gallop, to draw the carbine from their belt, to fire it with exactness, to place it under their thigh, in order to seize a pistol, which they discharged and threw over their shoulders; then a second, with which they did the same, trusting to the cords by which they were fastened, without giving themselves time to replace them. The Beys who were present encouraged them; and he who shattered the earthen vase, which served for their target, was rewarded with praises and money. They were also taught skilfully to manage the sabre, especially the reverse stroke, which cuts upwards, and is most difficult to ward off. The edge of the Memlook sabre was so excellent, and their hands were so dexterous, that many would cut through a bale of wet cotton, as if it were butter.*

At a short distance beyond the pilgrim camp, we passed along the skirts of one of those extensive cemeteries, which may almost be said to encompass Cairo on every side. These necropolises, or suburbs of the dead, are not inclosed, as in European countries, with wall or railings, or by a circumvallation of pious reverence as in Nubia; thither, on the contrary, the jugglers, the dancing girls, the lewd and profligate of both sexes, repair; and by their bacchanalian orgies, conducted with indescribable effrontery, profane, in open daylight, the peaceful but neglected grave. In the midst of the cemetery stand a few superior mausolea, the last home of the wealthy and the great, consisting of a neat square building, in the light Saracenic style, surmounted by a dome or cupola, resembling that whence Bedreddin Hassan was taken away in his sleep by the Jinneyeh; but by far the greater number are humble tombs, whitewashed, as in Wales, and exhibiting evident signs of dilapidation and decay. Having traversed this melancholy spot, and the sandy tract beyond it, we entered on the richly-cultivated plain of Heliopolis, interspersed with groves of spreading trees, and the evergreen odoriferous gardens of Africa. Such landscapes, though

* Oriental Herald, vol. iv. p. 175, *et seq.*

destitute of the charm of hill and dale, always appeared to me eminently beautiful, when clothed, as they now were, with the fresh vegetation of spring. Here the rhamnus-lotus, the lime-tree, the citron, and the orange, growing in unpruned luxuriance, presented to the eye their lovely fruit, partly green and partly gold, clustering thick among the dark leaves, which, when pressed or shaken by the wind, exhaled a rare and delicious perfume. Every part of the prospect, far as the eye could reach, exhibited some peculiar charm. The trees and bushes by the wayside—many of the latter apparently deciduous—were already covered with young leaves; and innumerable wild flowers; some—as the daisy and the butter-cup—familiar, others unknown, enamelled the fields. In several places the ground was covered with newly-cut grass, which, as the warm rays fed upon its moisture, diffused that well-known, but exquisite fragrance, which scents our English hay-fields; while numerous rills of clear water, running through grassy channels, maintained an agreeable freshness in the air. But, perhaps, the master-charm of all derived its power from historical associations,—I was approaching the birth-place of Moses; before me was the plain on which the Hebrew shepherds first pitched their tents on their arrival in Egypt; and such considerations, whatever may be the case with others, have always, I confess, exerted much influence over me.

Sometime before arriving at Matarea, we turned into a citron grove on the right hand of the road, to behold that venerable sycamore, in whose shade the Virgin, with the infant Christ, is said to have reposed during the flight into Egypt. In all respects this grove was an agreeable retreat. The spaces between the trees, roofed by a thick canopy of verdure, completely excluded the rays of the sun, while a cool breeze circulated through them freely. Other kinds of fruit-trees, besides the citron, rose here and there in the grove, and presented, in their unpruned luxuriance, an aspect of much beauty. Birds of agreeable note, or gay plumage, flitted to and fro, or perched upon the branches; otherwise, the silence and stillness would have been complete, and might have tempted me to remain there for hours, delighting my imagination with reminiscences of the Arabian Nights, whose heroes and heroines are often represented reposing in such places. Here, likewise, is the *Ain Shems*, or "Fountain of the Sun," which, though supposed by Catholic traditions to have been miraculously produced to quench the thirst of the holy fugitives, existed, no doubt, in all ages; and was, perhaps, if we may derive any inference from the modern appellation, consecrated to the service of a temple of Aroëris. Our brethren of the Church of Rome love to interpolate the traditions of antiquity, and to complete a legend, if they imagine it in any respects to require rounding off. According to them, for example, it was in the fountain at our feet, that the Virgin, with her own hands, washed the garments of the infant Saviour. Nothing is more natural or probable, nor, for a fact of this kind, should we require the testimony of history. I see no harm, therefore, in supposing that it was so; and it seems to me to be a very perverse species of ingenuity to get up a formidable array of arguments to demolish harmless traditions like these. The Tree of the Madonna, as it is denominated, even by the Mohammedans, consists of a vast trunk, the upper part of which having

been blown down by storms, or shattered by lightning, young branches have sprung forth from the top, and extending their arms on all sides, still afford a broad and agreeable shade. Its shape is remarkable: flat on both sides, like a wall, but with an irregular surface, it leans considerably, forming a kind of natural penthouse. Numerous names, accompanied by the figure of the cross, have been cut by Catholic travellers; but even the Moslems seem to regard it with veneration; for those who visited it with us spoke low and reverentially, as if they esteemed the spot where they stood to be holy ground. Protestants, from I know not what motive, sometimes affect to consider the tradition which sanctifies this tree as one of those many childish legends which have diverted Christians from the spirituality and simplicity of faith, but by what chain of ratiocination they arrive at this conclusion, it appears somewhat difficult to discover. At all events, since the Egyptian sycamore, among various other trees, will live many thousand years, there is nothing absurd in the supposition that the Virgin may have sat with the infant Saviour under the shade of this noble trunk, which bears all the appearance of prodigious antiquity.

According to a tradition prevalent among the Mohammedans, Elizabeth also fled with the infant John the Baptist into Egypt. Respecting Zachariah, the father of John, they relate a most extravagant story. The Jews having accused him of a great crime, and sought to put him to death, he hid himself in the heart of a tree, and might thus have escaped, had not Satan, the enemy of God, discovered his hiding-place. The people splitting the tree, in order to secure their victim, accidentally cut him to pieces with their axes, as the story is very gravely told by El-Masudi.

In Pietro della Valle's time, a house was shown at Matarea, in which the Virgin was supposed to have lived; and beneath a small window or recess in the wall, the Christian clergy resident in the country used to say mass.

From this grove we proceeded through beautiful corn-fields to the site of Heliopolis, marked by extensive mounds, and a single obelisk, rising alone in the plain, and at this time surrounded by a thick crop of barley. This obelisk, consisting of one block of red granite, about sixty-five feet in height, is still nearly perfect; a part of the western face only having been chipped away, probably at the time when Cambyses ordered immense fires to be kindled around this and similar monuments, in order to obliterate the traces of an idolatry which he despised, or of an ancient power which he had overthrown, and whose regeneration he may have dreaded. An inscription in hieroglyphical characters is repeated on each of its four faces; from which antiquaries, versed in the sacred language of the Egyptians, have discovered the name of the monarch by whom it was erected; but of this science I am entirely ignorant.

The Arab historian, Abdalatif, gives a very strange account of this obelisk. It was capped, he says, in his time with burnished copper, on which was represented the figure of a man seated on a throne and looking towards the east. But the most remarkable part of the story is this, that from beneath the copper coating water perpetually oozed forth and supplied nourishment to a quantity of fine moss, which extended a considerable way down the

obelisk, though neither the moss nor the water ever reached the ground. This circumstance the writer does not relate on hearsay: he saw it himself. Possibly, however, writing a long while afterwards from memory, he may have allowed his imagination to run away with his judgment, without intending to deceive. At all events he exaggerates greatly the dimensions of the obelisk, which he supposes to be 100 cubits high. The expression by which he seeks to characterize the rose-granite is curious. He says it resembled the couch of Venus, and was transparent. Somewhere near this spot stood the temple of which Potipherah, the father of Joseph's wife, was priest. Heliopolis, in fact, appears to have been the ancient capital of the country before the foundation of Memphis; for from the historical details in the book of Genesis it seems clear that, when Jacob and his sons came by the invitation of Joseph into Egypt, the seat of government and the palace of the Pharaohs were here, nigh to the land of Goshen, which the minister obtained for his relations. When, in subsequent ages, Memphis arose and became the habitation of the kings, Heliopolis dwindled into a city of inferior rank, though it still contained the most celebrated colleges of the priests, and was regarded as the university of Egypt. Here, accordingly, we find that Herodotus, Plato, and Eudoxus, men differing greatly from each other in character and genius, devoted much time and pains to the examination of the sciences and pretensions of the Egyptians: but from this period it must have fallen rapidly to decay; as, when Strabo and Ælius Gallus visited the spot, about thirty years before the Christian era, it had already been deserted by the priests, though the great Temple of the Sun was still standing and apparently frequented as a place of worship. The Greek geographer's description comprehends the notice of various ruins, temples, propylæa, obelisks, sphinxes, which no longer exist. Pococke, indeed, discovered several sphinxes among the mounds of rubbish; but these seem to have been buried by the continual accumulation of soil, for we could perceive no trace of them. Perhaps the solitary obelisk which marks the site of On, the city of the Sun, should be regarded as the most ancient monument existing in Egypt, since it was probably erected while this was the capital of the kingdom long before the foundation of Memphis. Diodorus, indeed, speaks of two obelisks set up here by Sesostris, one hundred and eighty feet in height, and twelve feet square at the base; and Pliny relates, that Sochis and Rameses, the latter contemporary with Priam, erected each four obelisks: those of Sochis seventy-two, those of Rameses sixty feet in height. But little stress can be laid on the vague traditions collected by such writers respecting the monarchs to whom certain public works should be attributed. In all probability, the Great Rameses of the Egyptians (whose name occurs in the book of Genesis), like the Rama of the Hindoos, was a mythological personage, identical with Papremis, their God of War; every great undertaking, the author of which was unknown, seeming, among the Egyptians, to have been referred to Rameses, as to Semiramis among the Assyrians. To him the priests of Thebes, (who probably knew no more of the ancient sacred language than we do), in their conversation with Germanicus, attributed the great military achievements and conquests of their ancestors, indulging,

for the purpose of raising his wonder, in a ridiculous style of exaggeration, which must have excited his laughter. The village of Matarea is situated about six miles N.E. of Cairo, at no great distance from the Birket-el-Haj, or Lake of the Pilgrims, where the caravan usually encamps on the second night of its departure for Mekka. On our return to Cairo, we passed two of the government Abattoirs, filthy, stinking, and surrounded by pools of blood, which, with the other abominations of the place, attracted thither in troops the wild dogs of the neighbourhood.

CHAPTER XII.

Across the Desert to the Fayoum.

In Egypt, the government intermeddles with everything. If, for example, you desire to enter into an engagement with a Bedouin Sheikh, to pass with security through any portion of the desert belonging to his tribe, it is necessary to appear before the governor of Cairo; to have your contract drawn up in his presence; and, when the instrument has been duly signed and sealed by both parties, to deposit the original, or a copy of it, in the citadel; should dromedaries be required for the purpose of performing a journey within the limits of Egypt, or of the other dominions of the Pasha, the regular course is, to make application to government, which will furnish, at a reasonable price, the necessary number of animals, properly accoutred, with the requisite Bedouin guides and attendants. To the traveller this regulation is of inestimable advantage. The sum to be paid being determined, no disagreeable wrangling, at least on this score, can take place between the stranger and the camel-drivers; and the undertaking is usually accomplished, where inveterate insolence or ill-nature does not constitute the characteristic of the parties concerned, in the utmost harmony and good feeling. In some cases, however, the authorities through heedlessness or indifference, seriously endanger the traveller's safety, by placing in his service guides, or attendants, belonging to tribes hostile to the lords of the country through which he is to pass; and as he must generally be ignorant of the history or existence of such feuds, the first circumstance, perhaps, which calls his attention to the subject, is a sudden attack in the desert; for the chivalrous Bedouins seem to regard it as a point of honour not to disturb the imaginations of their employers by awakening apprehensions of dangers which, after all, may not be predestined to happen. Such was the conduct of Habib Effendi in our particular case. He knew perfectly well that the Mahazi, or Atouni Arabs, inhabiting the desert extending from Suez to Kossier, were at enmity,—as most of the Eastern tribes are,—with the Moggrebyn Bedouins of Libya; yet it was from among the Atouni, abhorred by the people west of the Nile, that he selected for us a guide to Lake Mœris, through a province where even the Pasha's own engineers, in the most peaceable times, dared not make their appearance without a powerful military escort;

a fact of which I was assured at Alexandria by Mr. Wallace, who had been employed by the Pasha in surveying the various districts of the Fayoum, and who very kindly dissuaded me from hazarding the journey without a guard. It was, therefore, not unwarned that we undertook it; but the peril would have been considerably diminished, had our guide been chosen from any other tribe of Bedouins.

In all journeys of this kind, the pleasures of preparation and setting out, with the dim shadowing forth by the imagination of the adventures in which it is possible you may be engaged, are, perhaps, among the best that travelling supplies. Our provisions and kitchen utensils having been made ready, the impatience with which we awaited the appearance of our Mahazi, with his dromedaries, was extreme. At length, late in the day, he arrived, with four spare, long-legged animals, which seemed, like conscientious Mussulmen, to have gone through all the rigid observances of the Ramad'han. Mohammed, the guide, appeared from his bronzed, weather-beaten countenance, adorned with a long deep scar, and from the extreme airiness and freedom of his demeanour, differing entirely from that of the Fellahs, to be a fresh importation from the desert. He received our reproaches for the lateness of his arrival, as if conscious they were well merited, and replied only by the alacrity and activity with which he loaded the sumpter-camel, on which he was himself to be mounted, and adjusted the saddles of the other beasts. These operations completed, he informed us that all was ready; held down the heads of our dromedaries while we mounted; and then, vaulting lightly into his own saddle, put himself in advance of our little procession, and led the way through the tortuous, innumerable, endless streets of Cairo. Rejoiced at being once more in motion, my spirits rose as I quitted the city and began to look towards the desert, upon which we were soon to enter. The condition of mind in which travellers usually find themselves on such occasions, must, when described in words, appear, to such as have never experienced it, exceedingly incomprehensible, if not altogether absurd. These find it difficult to conceive what satisfaction a man can promise himself from riding on a dromedary, in the burning sun, across a waste of sand, where, if he encounters any living creature, it will probably be an enemy, where neither ruins nor any other traces of civilisation exist, and where, in fact, it is impossible that man should ever leave any permanent marks of his vanity or power. But these very considerations include the secret cause of the delight which is generated by a journey through the wilderness. Most persons have been made sensible, by experience or hearsay, of the sublimity of the ocean, traceable to the terrors, the uncertainties, the vast powers of destruction with which it has been endued by the Creator. But with all these qualities the desert appears to be clothed in a superior degree. You indeed feel, while traversing its pathless expanses, that you have your foot upon the earth; but you behold all around, as far as the eye can reach, innumerable mounds and hillocks of light sand, those inexhaustible magazines of destruction, ever ready to be lifted up by the whirlwind, and poured in irresistible torrents upon the traveller or the caravan. Here, moreover, in these desolate places of the earth, roams the indomitable Bedouin, the

model of primitive warfare and hospitality. Such are the circumstances which render the great wastes of Africa—those oceans of sand—delightful to traverse ; not that they are dangerous,—for no man can be in love with danger,—but that they awaken the spirit of adventure, the most fascinating, the most inexhaustible of all pleasures, and cast the gorgeous mantle of romance and poetry over the imagination, which, in the ordinary high-road of life, is apt to be clad in colours somewhat too sober.

On emerging from the streets of the city, we found that the wind, which blew with great violence from the south, was bringing along with it torrents of dust and sand, so thick and impetuous, that it was impossible to keep the eyes open for many seconds at a time. Even the dromedaries,

Bab Zuweyleh, Cairo.

habituated as they must have been to such a state of the atmosphere, seemed to go trembling on with their eyes closed, so that it was sometimes with difficulty we could keep them from striking against the walls, or running foul of each other. The sky, as usually in the scirocco, was filled with thick hazy clouds, through which the sun, when at intervals visible, appeared pale and rayless, like the moon. At the ferry between Old Cairo

and Ghizeh, we experienced some delay; but the time was not lost; for the scenes we witnessed among the Fellahs, male and female, who crowded the

El Ghizeh.

bank of the river, with their camels and asses, were so characteristic, and at the same time so grotesque and ludicrous, that they would have afforded many hours' amusement. There were several boats, but the number of passengers was so great that they scrambled for a place with as much warmth and eagerness as if they had been making their escape from an enemy. In their haste to cross the Nile, and return to the village, even the deference usually shown to a Frank was forgotten. Scarcely could we squeeze ourselves into one of the boats, between camels, asses, men, women, old and young, bags of corn, and baskets of bread, fruit and vegetables; and when we were in, the next difficulty was to keep the asses, in the midst of which we stood bolt upright, from treading on our toes. For some minutes a promiscuous crowd of men and beasts poured after us into the boat, the camels roaring, the asses braying, the women and children shrieking, the men swearing, until the mingled din exceeded that of Babel; at length, becoming impatient and angry, we compelled them to put off. On account of the violence of the wind, there was the greatest difficulty in keeping the boat steady; but, on the other hand, we crossed very rapidly, and had soon remounted on the opposite bank. I have already, in the account of my visit to the Pyramids, described the country through which we passed. The plain before us was that of Memphis, and the rich pasture, the corn-fields, the lofty date-woods, and the flocks and herds by which its surface was now diversified, clothed in the sombre hues of twilight, seemed rather to belong to antiquity than to the present day. In a short time the moon rose, and conferred a still more poetical character on the landscape; for the scirocco had passed, and with it the clouds and mist which had obscured the atmosphere. It is difficult to convey a just idea of the effect produced by moonlight on the figures of the numerous pyramids now visible: ranged like a file of pale shining mountains along the skirts of the desert, they seemed to be some shadowy spectral things, not of this world; the white expanse of sand at their feet, contrasted with the dusky hue of the cultivated land, giving them the appearance of huge fabrics based upon a cloud, like those

which the mind often fashions at evening among the vapours of a summer sky.

It was our intention, at starting, to proceed as far as Dashour; but Mohammed seemed to be of opinion that as, on the morrow, we should have to make a long journey, it would be better to go early to rest. We therefore directed our course towards the village of Mitraheni, guided by the extensive date woods and vast mounds, commonly supposed to be those of Memphis. Here the Fellahs have built their houses of unburned brick. Our first inquiry regarded not the antiquities scattered about the neighbourhood, or anything relating to them, but the practicability of getting something for dinner, which our long ride had rendered a matter of considerable importance; but the modern Memphians, whatever may have been the case with their ancestors, were so exceedingly ill provided, that our piastres, after making in vain the tour of the whole village, returned in their original shape to our purses, instead of being transmuted, by the divine alchemy of commerce, into beef or pigeons. Had we come empty-handed from the victorious city, we might therefore, if we pleased, have devoured the remains of the temple of Vulcan; but we contented ourselves with rice and maccaroni, which we shared with our Mahazi guide, who, though somewhat advanced in years, still exhibited in his appetite, as well as in everything else, the vigour and activity of youth. The little caravanserai of Mitraheni, which has seldom, I conceive, been applied to the accommodation of a Frank, exhibited, during our culinary and commercial operations, a very original spectacle. Our baggage being stowed away in a corner, we arranged our beds near, and, sticking a lamp in the earth, opened our maps and books close beside it, and lay down to consult them; so that the Arabs, whom curiosity attracted in crowds to the spot, took us, no doubt, for the members of some fanatical sect, who performed their devotions in that strange posture. The women, in particular, were greatly amused at our style of praying; and, after regarding us for some time with a feeling midway between laughter and astonishment, burst out into their usual exclamation of "Wallah!" (By God!) Meanwhile our Caireen and Bedouin attendants had kindled a fire not far from us on the ground, the smoke of which, having no appropriate vent above, made the circuit of the room, and, being of a very pungent quality, brought tears into the eyes of our fair friends, putting them forcibly in mind of that "Gehenna," to which they charitably condemn all Franks and Giaours. In a short time, therefore, the majority made their retreat; but when the rice and maccaroni were served up, they did us the honour to return, in order to satisfy themselves respecting the manner in which an infidel eats his supper,—expecting perhaps to be invited to share it, and cursing, all the time we ate, our inhospitable disposition; though, in point of fact, our whole stock, had it been cooked at once, would not have afforded our guests a mouthful each. When bed-time came, the ladies most politely quitted us; not from any idea of decorum, but because they were sleepy; for several, less drowsy than the rest, entered or passed through the room after we had lain down.

Having a long ride before us, we departed early next morning from Mitraheni; and proceeded along the skirts of the cultivated country,—one

of the most fertile and beautiful plains in the world. The morning was lovely. Fields and copses steeped in dew,—which, trickling over the leaves and grass, glittered like diamonds in the sun,—and sprinkled with delicate wild flowers, involuntarily recalled to remembrance the enthusiastic descriptions of poetry, and that golden age of impassioned innocence,—

"When love was liberty, and Nature law."

To the traveller, in a climate so warm and delightful as that of Egypt, the Golden Age, so long as the inhabitants are out of sight, is no fable. Kept continually in a state of rapturous excitement by the sun, his imagination casts its own vivid colouring over everything, and causes him to move about in an atmosphere of poetry. His spirits buoyant as air, his feelings harmonised, his heart involuntarily overflowing with benevolence, he is at peace with heaven and earth, and can with difficulty be made to believe in the existence of crime or misery. In such a frame of mind the plainest morsel is sweet; and, accordingly, the meals which we cooked and ate on the road, in the valley or the desert, beneath the shade of a tree, or amid hillocks of drifted sand, seemed more delicious than anything I had ever tasted; but for this pleasure, I was principally, perhaps, indebted to

Wayside Coffeehouse.

health and hunger. At Kafr-el-Kebir, we halted and unloaded our camels at a Sheikh's tomb, which we took the liberty to convert into a breakfast parlour. Our fire, however, was kindled, and our coffee prepared in the open air beside the camels, which always lay down and ate when we did. Some young women from the village brought us milk and new-laid eggs, remaining there laughing and talking until we mounted our dromedaries to depart; and then wished us, Franks and infidels as we were, a pleasant and prosperous journey.

Mohammed, our Mahazi guide, now advised us to load and keep in readiness our arms, as the road on which we were about to enter—if road it could be called, where road was none—was always beset by marauding parties of Moggrebyns, whose profession is robbery. Emerging from the cultivated country, we entered upon the Desert. It is difficult to convey a correct idea of those desolate and barren expanses bordering on the Valley of the Nile, to which the above term is applied. By the Arabs they are denominated Gebel, or "the Mountain," because the only mountains with which they are acquainted are characterised by extreme sterility. Besides, the surface of these boundless wastes, though seldom sufficiently elevated to possess, in the eyes of an European accustomed to the prodigious masses of the Alps, the aspect of a mountainous country, is in reality very far from being uniformly plane, or from presenting that dull monotonous appearance, which for want of experience, we are in general apt to attribute to it. But the face of the Desert is singularly diversified. Arid no doubt it is, and, to many, gloomy and dispiriting, suggesting ideas of death, which are certainly in most cases unwelcome: yet this is by no means the effect which it generally produces, since the Bedouins are, beyond most other nations, gay and cheerful; and, in my own case, never were my spirits more light, my fancy and imagination crowded with more pleasurable images, or my perceptions of the delights of existence more exquisitely keen, than when riding on a fleet dromedary across the sands, or through the stony valley of the Libyan desert, amid the refreshing breezes of the morning.

When we had proceeded several miles through the wild rocks interspersed among sandy hollows, which bordered our track, we perceived, on turning the foot of a hill, a party of Arabs a little in the rear, who, pursuing the same route, seemed to be proceeding towards the Fayoom. Among them was a Turkish gentleman, who, when he saw us, detached himself from the Arabs, and came galloping until he had overtaken our party. He then very politely demanded whether, as we appeared to be travelling in the same direction, we would permit him to join our company, since, the roads being unsafe, a large party was preferable to a small one: to which we assented, and somewhat slackened our pace, in order to enable his mule to keep up with us. In the course of the rambling conversation that ensued, and was kept up by our Turk with great vivacity, he inquired whether we had heard the news. Supposing he was alluding to some local affair, utterly indifferent to a stranger, we replied that, not being interested in such matters, we seldom concerned ourselves about them. "But in this affair," he said, "you are deeply interested. It relates to the Fayoom—the province whither you are going—in which by the machinations of the Moggrebyns, the fire of revolt has been kindled, and made to spread in the space of eight days over the whole country; where the authority of the Pasha is for the present at an end, and where his soldiers, in a battle near Sanhoor, have been defeated with loss by the Bedouins, and afterwards pursued up to the very walls of Medinet." He was himself, he observed, returning after a week's absence to the capital of the province, though exceedingly doubtful whether he should be able to reach it. This intelli-

gence threw a damp over our enthusiasm, since, instead of the "peace and welcome" with which we had everywhere else in Egypt been received, it seemed probable that, if subjected to nothing worse, we should at least experience a portion of the insolence and humiliation which were heaped upon our older travellers. Come what might, however, we determined to proceed. Our spirits and our arms were good; and although, if attacked by numbers, there would be no chance of escape, we trusted to that aversion, which even bad men feel, to shed the blood of the solitary stranger who confidently ventures among them.

By degrees the conversation flowed into another channel, and our imaginations became occupied by the singular features of the landscape. Here and there the rocks, though never rising to any great height, put on the appearance of houses, fortresses, or ruined castles, perched on grey cliffs, overhanging ravines narrow and tortuous, whose mouths only presented themselves to the eye as we passed. To these succeeded broad flinty or sandy valleys; long reaches, like the bed of a great river, between bare, stony mountains, alternating with extensive plains of sand or gravel; hillocks of various colours; and winding tracks through passes, where a few Bedouins might easily rout a whole caravan.

On our way we met or passed several small parties of Arabs going to or returning from Egypt, all of whom gave us the "Salaam Aleycúm," or friendly salutation, to which we made the proper reply. Formerly, no Mohammedan, however lax in his religious principles, would have addressed these words—which appear to imply friendship and corresponding opinions—to a Christian, even though otherwise disposed to treat him with kindness; but with the decline of their national power, a less overbearing style of manners has been introduced; and it is now not uncommon, at least in Egypt, for both Turks and Arabs thus to salute the stranger, whatever may be his creed. Nevertheless, I have met with well-informed persons at Alexandria, who, not having remarked the change, insisted it had not taken place. The argument happening, however, to be carried on among the ruins of the ancient city, while riding home in the evening from the tower of the Cæsars, was immediately terminated; several Arabs, returning to their villages, passed us on the road; to each of these I addressed the "Salaam Aleycúm," and was invariably saluted, in reply, with the "Aleycúm Salaam." By this means my friends were convinced that the Egyptian Moslem is no longer averse to address this sacred formula to a Christian, knowing him to be such.

Our Turkish companion was mounted on a mule of exceeding beauty, equally remarkable for colour and form; and, as we rode along on our spare ungainly beasts, whose utility can only be surpassed by their ugliness, it was impossible not to cast down, occasionally, an admiring glance at the sleek and spirited animal by our side, which seemed to be animated by the resolution not to be outdone in speed even by the native courser of the Desert. Observing our admiration, which, in the East, appears to be always interpreted into begging, the Turk immediately made us an offer of his mule; adding, politely, by way of inducement, that at home he possessed a great number of similar animals; that it was, in reality, of no

value; but that since it seemed to hit our fancy, we should oblige him much by accepting it. From this obligation, or compliment, whichever it may have been, we defended ourselves, by saying it was our intention to return to our country by sea, when the confinement, want of exercise, and tossing about by storms, if they did not kill, would probably spoil the beast; and therefore, though highly sensible of his generosity, we must decline profiting by it.

In all the long tract of country, extending, in this direction, between the Nilotic valley and the Fayoom, the principle of vegetation appears to be entirely extinct; neither tree, nor shrub, nor plant of any kind, however minute or simple in its organisation, presenting itself to the eye. Of animals and reptiles, native to the wild, no trace appears. Death, therefore, seems here the paramount lord of all; if death can be said to reign where there is nothing to die. But I would not be understood to assert positively that neither plants nor animals exist in this Desert, though unquestionably we saw none; for, since even the snows on the solitary and nearly inaccessible heights of the Hindú Kúsh are said to be peopled with what, by the natives, is denominated the snow-worm, it is exceedingly probable that the sands, also, of the wilderness have their inhabitants, which may yet be discovered by the minute investigations of science.

I had been riding along in a reverie, when, chancing to raise my head, I thought I perceived, desertwards, a dark strip on the far horizon. What could it be? My companion, who had very keen sight, was riding in advance of me, and, with a sudden exclamation, he pulled up his dromedary, and gazed in the same direction. I called to him, and asked him what he thought of yonder strip, and whether he could make out anything in it distinctly. He answered, that water had all at once appeared there; that he saw the motion of the waves, and tall palms and other trees bending up and down over them, as if tossed by a strong wind. An Arab was at my side, with his face muffled up in his burnous; I roused his attention, and pointed to the object of our inquiry. "Mashallah!" cried the old man, with a face as if he had seen a ghost, and stared with all his might across the Desert. All the other Arabs of the party evinced no less emotion; and our interpreter called out to us, that what we saw was the evil spirit of the desert, that led travellers astray, luring them farther and farther into the heart of the waste, ever retreating before them as they pursued it, and not finally disappearing till its deluded victims had irrecoverably lost themselves in the pathless sands. This, then, was the Mirage. My companion galloped towards it, and we followed him, though the Arabs tried to prevent us, and ere long I could, with my own eyes, discern something of this strange phenomenon. It was, as my friend had reported, a broad sheet of water, with fresh green trees along its banks; and yet there was nothing actually before us but parched yellow sand. The apparition occasioned us all very uncomfortable feelings, and yet we congratulated ourselves on having seen for once the desert wonder.

The phenomenon really deserves the name the Arabs give it, of Goblin of the Desert; an evil spirit that beguiles the wanderer from the safe path, and mocks him with a false show of what his heated brain paints in glow-

ing colours. Whence comes it that this illusion at first fills with uneasiness —I might even say, with dismay—those even who ascribe its existence to natural causes? On a spot where the bare sands spread out for hundreds of miles, where there is neither tree nor shrub, nor a trace of water, there suddenly appeared before us groups of tall trees, proudly girding the running stream, on whose waves we saw the sunbeams dancing. Hills clad in pleasant green rose before us and vanished; small houses, and towns with high walls and ramparts, were visible among the trees, whose tall boles swayed to and fro in the wind like reeds.

Far as we rode in the direction of the apparition, we never came any nearer to it: the whole seemed to recoil, step for step, with our advance. We halted, and remained long in contemplation of the magic scene, until whatever was unpleasant in its strangeness ceased by degrees to affect us. Never had I seen any landscape so vivid as this seeming one; never water so bright, or trees so softly green, so tall and stately. Everything seemed far more charming there than in the real world; and so strongly did we feel this attraction, that, although we were not driven by thirst to seek for water where water there was none, still we would willingly have followed on and on after the phantom; and thus we could well conceive how the despairing wanderer, who, with burning eyes, thinks he gazes on water and human dwellings, will struggle onward to his last gasp to reach them, until his fearful, lonely doom befals him.

We returned slowly to our Arabs, who had not stirred from the spot where we left them. Looking back once more into the desert, we saw the apparition gradually becoming fainter, until at last it melted away into a dim band, not unlike a thin mist sweeping over the face of a field.* It was probably this phenomenon, which is beheld as well in Hadramaut and Yemen as in the deserts of Egypt, which gave rise to the fable of the Garden of Irem, described in the story of the Phantom Camel, in the "Tales of the Ramad'han."

But the sense of vision is not the only one which the genius of the Desert mocks with fantastic tricks: the ear too sometimes experiences illusions, an instance of which is related by a recent traveller as having occurred to him on his way from Gaza to Cairo. "On the fifth day of my journey," he says, "the air above lay dead, and all the whole earth that I could reach with my utmost sight and keenest listening, was still and lifeless, as some dispeopled and forgotten world that rolls round and round in the heavens through wasted floods of light. The sun, growing fiercer and fiercer, shone down now more mightily than ever on me he shone before, and as I dropped my head under his fire, and closed my eyes against the glare that surrounded me, I slowly fell asleep, for how many minutes or moments I cannot tell; but after a while I was gently awakened by a peal of church bells—my native bells—the innocent bells of Marlen, that never before sent forth their music beyond the Blaygon hills! My first idea naturally was that I still remained fast under the power of a dream. I roused myself and drew aside the silk that covered my eyes, and plunged my bare face into the light; then, at

* Hackländer.

least, I was well enough wakened, but still those old Marlen bells kept ringing on, not ringing for joy, but properly, prosily, steadily ringing 'for church.' After a while the sound died away slowly: it happened that neither I nor any of my party had a watch by which to measure the exact time of its lasting, but it seemed to me that about ten minutes had passed before the bells ceased. I attributed the effect to the great heat of the sun, the perfect dryness of the clear air through which I moved, and the deep stillness of all around me; it seemed to me that these causes, by occasioning a great tension and consequent susceptibility of the hearing organs, had rendered them liable to tingle under the passing touch of some mere memory, that must have swept across my brain in a moment of sleep. Since my return to England it has been told me that like sounds have been heard at sea, and that the sailor becalmed under a vertical sun in the midst of the wide ocean, has listened in trembling wonder to the chiming of his own village bells."*

At length, late in the afternoon, we discovered, on the verge of the horizon, the tops of the palm-trees, extending in one dark line from west to east, as far as the eye could reach, and marking the northern boundary of that celebrated and beautiful oasis,—for such is the Fayoom,—towards which we were journeying. If the Desert has its charms,—and charms not a few it has,—those green and fertile spots, which its burning sands encompass like an ocean, are, in a different way, no less attractive. To the former belong wildness, grandeur, sublimity—qualities that powerfully stir up the energies of the soul, and nerve it for exertion and strife; to the latter, whatever is soft, and soothing, and lovely; or, to sum up all agreeable qualities in one word, all that is *feminine* in nature. The Desert, therefore, can only please certain temperaments, and in certain moods of mind; but those landscapes on which heaven has showered down the principles of beauty and fertility, where the earth is filled with abundance, and the air with fragrance, must delight, like woman, at all times, by awakening those poetical and impassioned associations that constitute the elements of the most perfect enjoyment. As we approached nearer and nearer to the cultivated region, we observed various changes in the surface of the waste. At first, a few scattered wild plants and flowers, the outposts or advanced guard of vegetation, showed themselves timidly among the sand-hills, where some imperceptible moisture—the scanty dews diffused thus far, perhaps, by the exhalations of Lake Mœris—sustained their verdure. As we advanced, these signs of fertility became more numerous. A thin net-work, as it were, of creeping plants, denser in the hollows, more rare upon the eminences, clothed with a greyish verdure the undulating outline of the Desert, as if to prepare us gradually for the luxuriant and almost tropical magnificence of vegetation which we were to witness farther on.

In approaching Tameia, we traversed the ancient canal, which, during the inundations, conducts the waters of the Nile from the Bahr Yusuf to the lake; for the town, contrary to what appears in the ordinary maps,

* Eothen.

is situated on the south-west bank of the watercourse. Our Turkish companion accompanied us to the caravanserai, where, in confirmation of the alarming intelligence he had given by the way, we perceived a Bedouin horseman, lance in hand, mounting guard at the gate. Fortunately, the Bedouin, whose attention at the moment was otherwise engaged, observed not the Turk, who, hastily bidding us farewell, slipped behind a wall, and made his escape. With us the case was different. It was not by avoiding but by boldly facing the Bedouin, that we were to hope for safety. Riding, therefore, directly up to the gateway, and passing the guard, who made way for us, we entered the court, dismounted, and, ordering our beasts to be unladen, took possession of the best room in the caravanserai. This done, we went forth, unattended, to view the town and its antiquities. It soon became obvious that we had got among people exceedingly different from the Fellahs on the Nile; for, instead of exhibiting that *naïve* simplicity and curious wonder, always evident on the countenance of the latter, the Fayoomis displayed in their behaviour an impudent familiarity, bordering on positive insolence; rushed to snatch our arms out of our hands, in order to satisfy their curiosity in their own way; followed us about in crowds, insisting, whether we would or not, on constituting themselves our guides; to which we at length put a stop, by informing them that, whether they guided or left us to ourselves, was a matter of perfect indifference, for that, in either case, we had determined not to give them a single *para*. However, two or three men still stuck close to our skirts, but conducted themselves very civilly; and we promised to employ them, should we need any guides on the morrow.

At Tameia the principal objects of curiosity are the remains of the extensive reservoir and water-works, by means of which all the fields in the vicinity were formerly irrigated. Pococke, in whose time this reservoir was still perfect, believed it to have been a recent work, constructed in consequence of the gradual filling up of the canal; which originally, he supposed, conveyed from the Nile sufficient water for the purposes of agriculture. But since the beds of the canals, everywhere, perhaps, in the Fayoom, are higher than the lake, reservoirs or sluices must always have been necessary, to prevent the water-courses from becoming absolutely dry. To those who may think the canals were formerly deep, I may observe that the water, nowhere half-leg deep, now runs like a natural rivulet, among pebbles, over the living rock. On either shore of this tiny stream the soil left by the inundation, not rising a foot above the level of the water, was in many places covered with a good crop of corn. The banks are high, and lined at intervals with masonry, while massive ruins and substructions are scattered about in various directions. A dam, or wall, of immense height and thickness, supported externally by a number of enormous buttresses, was formerly thrown across the valley,—for, from its great depth and breadth, it deserves the name;—but this has been partly swept away by some resistless flood, leaving a gap, towards the centre, of about fifty yards across. The water-works, of inferior dimensions and importance, exist close to this, on the western bank of the canal, and are still available in irrigation. The canals by which this part of the Fayoom is fertilized,

do not, as Pococke imagined, communicate directly with the Nile; being minor branches of the Bahr Yusuf, running off from the main stream in the neighbourhood of Hawara and Senofer, passing some by Saylek, Sirsin, and Maâtli, and others by Masloob, El Massera, and Zirbi. Extensive tracts of land, formerly cultivated to the east of the canals, are now neglected, and gradually, through lack of moisture, crumbling into sand, and mingling with the Desert, which at present seems to be everywhere gaining ground.

About the bed of the canal were numerous water-fowl, such as wild-ducks, curlews, snipes, and siksaks, skimming to and fro, and uttering their plaintive screams; but as it seemed probable we should have other use for our arms, we did not molest them. The stream, diminutive but rapid, ran in limpid purity through a channel sometimes rocky, sometimes lined with a mossy grass, rippling, murmuring, or breaking in tiny cascades over abrupt descents in its bed. We pursued its course for two or three miles, in the hope of discovering some genuine remnant of antiquity, or that remarkable opening, whether natural or artificial, by which Lake Mœris is said to have flowed, during six months of the year, into the Nile. In the latter expectation we were disappointed; nothing resembling such a channel appeared; and observing that sunset was drawing near, we desisted from further search. Before we quitted the channel of the canal, an hyena appeared in one of the breaks on the opposite bank; but very quietly, on our approach, made its escape into the Desert. On attaining an elevated point of the undulating plain, west of the stream, I caught the first glimpse of Lake Mœris, magnificently stretching away from east to west, crimsoned all over by the setting sun, and glittering like a sea of molten amethyst. To obtain a more extensive view of this glorious prospect, we climbed to the top of a ruined Sheikh's tomb—such as are found picturesquely scattered over all the desert parts of Egypt,—and from thence beheld what, if it be really, as antiquity believed, artificial, must incontestibly be regarded as the greatest, most poetical, and sublime of all the works of the Egyptian kings. My thoughts in an instant were hurried away to the shores of Lake Leman, where my children were then at play; and this ideal association imperceptibly, perhaps, imparted to the scene a beauty, a grandeur, an enchaining interest, which, for many other travellers, it may not possess. But, independently of any such consideration, this noble lake must always be regarded with enthusiasm. Those vast basins, scooped out by the hand of nature on the surface of our globe, however immense they may be, excite in us no wonder, since we know that to the Power which created them all things are possible; but when we behold something similar effected by the genius and labour of man, producing a remarkable and permanent feature in the external configuration of the world, it seems lawful to experience something like exultation, while we reflect that, however feeble and transitory we may be, it is still within our competency, when seconded by the co-operation of others, to construct for the admiration and benefit of future ages monuments little less durable, perhaps, than the world itself.

Near the saint's tomb, the ruins of which afforded us so fine a view of the lake, we observed, in a field formerly cultivated, fragments of two red

granite columns, exquisitely polished and scolloped. Some great public edifice, palace, or temple, must, therefore, have formerly existed near this spot, of which further traces might probably be discovered by excavation; but for this, even in more tranquil times, a military escort would, perhaps, be necessary. On returning to the caravanserai, we found a mob collected round the Bedouin horseman at the gateway; but with what intentions we knew not. From their looks, however, it was clear they regarded us with no friendly eye, though they offered us no opposition. The agitation now prevailing among this savage populace had an aspect altogether revolutionary. Deserting their homes, and putting off those domestic habits, to which, under ordinary circumstances, they are attached, they seemed to be in momentary expectation of some exciting event, which might apparently justify them in taking up arms, and plunging into excesses. Our apartment close to the gate, having no door, exposed us to the perpetual gaze of the multitude, continually passing and repassing. By day the wretched place received light through several holes in the roof and walls, which now admitted the cold evening air; while overhead, a goat was running to and fro, shaking down upon our heads showers of dust and straw, with which it was fortunate that no scorpions were mingled. Dinner being ready, we sat down on the beds, and placing the plates upon our knees, despatched our meal thus, by the light of a small lamp stuck in the floor; while the insolent crowd filled the doorway, staring and laughing in the rudest manner. At this moment a number of soldiers, who had just traversed the Desert, arrived at the caravanserai; upon which the Bedouin sentinel disappeared, as if by magic; and the mob slinking away from about the entrance, tranquillity was for the time restored. However, it was possible that the place might still be assaulted during the night, in order, as at Sanhoor, to cut off the soldiers; and, therefore, when the great gate had been shut, and we lay down to sleep, our brave and faithful Atouni guide, wakeful and vigilant, as accustomed to the sudden surprises and night-attacks of a Desert life, placed himself across the doorway, that, should any attempt be made upon us, the assailants might have to pass, in the first instance, over his body. Fatigued and drowsy, it was not long before we fell asleep; and no disturbance occurred during the night to interrupt our slumbers.

CHAPTER XIII.

Adventures during a Visit to Lake Mœris.

Had the Moggrebyns stormed the Okella that night, they would have acquired considerable booty, it being filled with merchants, chiefly inhabitants of the province, returning with the goods they had purchased at Cairo. Most of these persons, as is the custom in the East, were stirring and preparing to depart at an extremely early hour; and when, shortly after dawn, the gates were opened, recommenced their journey. Our Atouni guide, whose "green old age" had left him all the vigour and

activity of youth, was on foot with the earliest of them, and engaged in saddling and loading the dromedaries. Nothing so much contributes, I imagine, to the habit of early rising, so universal in the East, as their custom of lying on the ground, and never undressing when they go to rest; for it requires no effort to rise early, when you have only to put on your slippers, and adjust your turban, in order to be ready for a journey; and where, besides, the air is so pleasant that it is a luxury to be abroad. All things being ready, we departed immediately after sunrise; and our dromedaries, fresh and naturally swift-paced, soon overtook the long strings of laden camels and asses proceeding towards the interior, which had quitted the caravanserai so much earlier. Their road lying towards Medinet, we very quickly left them behind, and struck off into a different track in the direction of Senooris and the lake.

The country in the immediate neighbourhood of Tameia consists of a rich alluvial soil, which would repay the labours of the husbandman with abundant harvests, but it seems to have been long abandoned, and was now in an entirely uncultivated state. We very soon entered, however, upon a plain smiling and fertile, intersected by innumerable small canals, along the banks of which ran high causeways, serving as roads, and forming the only links of communication between the villages during the time of the inundation. In many places the water still remained in small pools, bordered with rushes and tufted reeds, constituting an interesting feature in a plain of matchless beauty, clothed with vegetation ;—tender young corn, wheat in the ear, lupines, clover, beans, all in flower, enamelling the fields, and impregnating the whole air with fragrance. Towards the right, through breaks in the date forests, and the thick undergrowth of tamarisks and mimosas, we occasionally, in riding along, caught hasty glimpses of the calm shining surface of the lake, with the sterile crags and wide wastes of sand which form its northern shore. Never, at any period of my life,—except, perhaps, on the day that saw me wandering among the barren mountains of Messenia in the Peloponnesus,—did I derive, from the presence of mere inanimate objects, a delight so perfect, so capable of absorbing the thoughts and filling the whole mind, so replete with poetical enjoyment, so intense and rapturous, as I experienced during this morning's ride. The landscape appeared to comprehend every element of interest and beauty; a plain of unrivalled richness and fertility, exhibiting each various shade of verdure, intersected by streams of water, sprinkled with tufted groves, disclosing between their foliage the rural village, and the towering minaret; beyond these, the artificial sea of Mœris, quivering and glittering in the sun; and, in the distance forming the majestic background of the picture, a range of rocky mountains, of commanding elevation, arid, frowning, desolate, but invested with an air of gloomy grandeur highly congenial to the state of mind in which I viewed them. To those mute physical sources of pleasure, others of a moral nature were added. History and fable had assisted in peopling the spot with numerous interesting reminiscences; but, more than each and all of these, extending in an almost continuous line along that edge of the lake, was a series of black tents, the dwelling-places of the redoubtable cavalry

of the Desert, which had defied and broken the power of Persian, and Greek, and Roman, and Turk; and although, in the actual posture of affairs, we were not without apprehension from their marauding character, the consideration by no means diminished the pleasurable excitement of the moment.

About nine o'clock we halted at a small caravanserai, standing near the cemetery, in the outskirts of Senooris; and while Abu Zaid was engaged in kindling a fire and preparing coffee, our active old Bedouin proceeded into the village in search of milk. The inhabitants, little accustomed to the visits of strangers, seeing us dismount from our camels, came flocking thither in crowds which increased every moment. Our dress and appearance, which had elsewhere excited no attention, seemed to them an object of wonder; and my writing apparatus, viewed with some degree of suspicion in all parts of Egypt, called forth so many extraordinary remarks, and was beheld with so many evident signs of disapprobation and alarm, that it appeared judicious to make no further use of it in their sight, lest it should draw upon us some unpleasant consequences.

In Europe, more especially in the sceptical atmosphere of large cities, even the vulgar affect to be delivered from the terrors of superstition, and the belief in the force of charms and talismans; though, were the matter probed to the bottom, the old leaven might still, perhaps, be found lurking in the recesses of their souls; but in the East, ignorance has not yet learned to conceal its deformity behind the mask of philosophy. What they believe and apprehend, that they profess to apprehend and believe. Dissimulation, on such subjects, is above their reach. It was, therefore, as I have said, not without terror and dislike that they observed me writing, and consulting books and maps, all which things they ingenuously regard as the implements of a magician; and at length, in order to put a stop to my diabolical machinations, it was hinted that the drift of our proceedings was perfectly well understood; that we were come to take away the gold which, according to them, lies concealed in great abundance in the earth on the shores of Lake Mœris. We were supposed to be in possession of a book, by the reading of which, in the vicinity of buried treasures, we could cause the ground to open, and attract the gold to the surface; which, they assured us, had, to their knowledge, been done by a famous magician, who visited the province some years ago. This is their only idea of the use of books.

In order to tranquillize their minds respecting their hidden treasures, I shut up all my magical instruments, and, quitting the caravanserai, strolled forth among the tombs in the cemetery. But this was making a transition from bad to worse. Ghouls and Effrits and Marids, in the shape of men, delight to roam about amid graves and sepulchres, where, at certain periods of the day or night, they unearth the dead and feed upon their corpses; and, to judge by their looks, the good people of Senooris seemed not to be entirely exempt from the suspicion that we might possibly belong to that infernal order of beings. When, however, they beheld us sit down to breakfast in front of the caravanserai, and make use, like Mussulmans, of coffee and bread, their ideas took another direction, and they seemed, poor creatures! to envy us every mouthful we ate. They, in fact, acknowledged

that the oppression and rapacity of the Pasha's government had reduced them to a state of starvation; observing that, at length, the old prophecy was fulfilled, the father's hand being turned against the child, and the child's against the father, food being now all they thought of; that honest men, instigated by hunger, and beholding their wives and little ones pining and perishing around them through want, had become robbers, and infested the roads, on which assaults and murders were daily committed; and that Mohammed Ali,—"upon whom," exclaimed they, "be the curse of God!"—with his monopolies and ambition, was the cause of all their calamities. On the rebellion of the Moggrebyn Bedouins they appeared to dwell with satisfaction, as if they hoped, through their aid, to recover their independence, and see better days. It is possible, therefore, they may have somewhat exaggerated their forces, the extent of their political views, and the terror of their arms; but, whether this was the case or not, it was quite clear, from every view of their account, that we had entered the Fayoom at a peculiarly inauspicious moment, and could neither retreat nor advance, in any direction, without running imminent risk of being murdered; for the Western Arabs, taking advantage of the discontents of the people, the absence of the Pasha's military forces in Syria and the Hejaz, and crediting, or feigning to credit, the report of the arrival of an English and French fleet at Alexandria, for the purpose of deposing Mohammed Ali, had poured themselves in from the Desert in vast bodies, encamped close to the towns, or spread themselves in marauding parties through the country, everywhere setting at defiance the authority of government.

Though relying, perhaps, upon the support of the Moggrebyns, and for the moment, fearing nothing from the Pasha, the people of Senooris, unlike their brethren of Tameia, behaved—if we except their aversion to our talismans—with exemplary civility, running eagerly to fetch from the village whatever we wanted, and accepting with thankfulness the trifles given them in return for their services. By the time we had ended our meal, however, and prepared to remount, the crowd which had collected round us was considerable; though their manners underwent no change. They merely ventured to advise us, in a friendly way, not to advance any further into the country, which we should find teeming with difficulties and dangers; but not knowing what degree of credit to yield to their reports, and unwilling to turn back for what might afterwards appear to be but a vain rumour, we declined following their counsel, and inquired whether there was any one among them who, for a handsome present, would undertake to be our guide to the turbulent town of Sanhoor and the lake. The idea appeared absurd, and they allowed us to ride away without a guide; but we had scarcely turned the eastern extremity of the town, before a young man, of bold but prepossessing countenance, presented himself, offering to conduct us whithersoever we might desire; and to his fidelity and good sense we were indebted, before the sun went down, for our lives.

Senooris is a considerable town, possessing a handsome mosque, adorned with a lofty minaret; but, in accordance with the practice everywhere

prevailing in Egypt, its environs are deformed by enormous mounds of filth and rubbish, between which a canal winds its way through a deep broad channel towards the north. In our way to Zaouya, the lake was constantly visible, unless when the view was intercepted by trees. Occasionally the windings of the camel-track conducted us into the immediate vicinity of the Moggrebyn encampments, from which we at length saw a small party of horse detach itself, and move westward, parallel with our route, evidently for the purpose of reconnoitring our movements. Perceiving the difficulty of our position, it might, perhaps, have been prudent to have abandoned the idea of descending to the shores of the lake,—of which we could now command an admirable prospect,—and have directed our course towards Medinet. But it was for the purpose of beholding the creation of Mœris that we had principally desired to visit the Fayoom; and to have returned without tasting its waters, and contemplating at leisure the wild beauties of its shores, would have grieved us exceedingly. Besides, in all intercourse with savages, it has been observed, that less danger is incurred by advancing carelessly and confidently among them, than by manifesting symptoms of dread; and, therefore, without appearing to observe the hostile demonstrations of the "Sons of Ismael," we continued to pursue our original plan. Now, however, our stout-hearted old *Atouni* began, not altogether without reason, to entertain apprehensions for the safety of his camels;—if he felt any for his own, he was too proud to own it;—and, lifting up his hands, bewailed the poor beasts, as if they were already lost. Between his tribe and the Moggrebyns of the Fayoom there existed, he said, a blood-feud; and they would certainly not let slip the present occasion of satiating their rancorous and hereditary hatred. I observed, however, that he made no mention of turning back, either conceiving it to be too late, or from the natural predilection of his whole race for strife and bloodshed. Many causes combined to render our progress slow and irksome. Owing to the infinite number of small canals, which intersect the country in all directions, the camel-track meanders in the most extraordinary manner, now leading towards the north, and now towards the south. Frequently, it became necessary to dismount, and force or coax the dromedaries to leap the ditches which crossed our path; and, on one occasion, fortunately when no one was on his back, one of them fell, and rolled into the canal, from whence we had some difficulty to extricate him. At Zaouya, where we paused to make some passing inquiries, our Cairo domestic was on the point of seriously compromising us, by informing the inhabitants, through the vanity of being supposed to belong to the service of persons in authority, that we were officers of the Pasha, proceeding through the country in the execution of our duty; which, since all these people were in league with the enemy, would, in all probability, have effected our destruction. Understanding quite enough of Arabic to detect the purport of his discourse, we questioned him on the subject; and finding our suspicions well founded, he was directed to contradict his former statement, and forbidden to propagate such a report for the future, on pain of being instantly shot.

Continuing to advance in a westerly direction, and passing through the

villages of Bayheeth and Tirseh, we at length arrived at the rebel town of Sanhoor, where, a few days before, had taken place the battle, in which the Pasha's forces were worsted by the Bedouins. It is, in fact, an extensive village, buried in a forest of date trees, and partly surrounded by a deep water-course. The canals of the Fayoom, though at this season of the year extremely shallow, have all the characteristic beauties of natural rivulets, running for the most part down gentle declivities, in a winding course, rippling and transparent, in many places over gravelly bottoms, between banks fringed with slender reeds or willows. On drawing near the town, we perceived a number of people engaged in a very noisy quarrel among the rubbish mounds,* but we received no molestation; on the contrary, an old man, with a venerable grey beard, who professed to be well acquainted with the country round the lake, came voluntarily forward, offering to be our guide. Having accepted his services, we were shortly afterwards joined by two other Arabs, who likewise, without further ceremony, constituted themselves our guides; so that, being attended by four gentlemen of this profession, not to mention our Mahazi Bedouin, there was little danger of losing our way.

On emerging from the date woods of Sanhoor, we observed that the land sloped gradually to the water's edge, and was covered, in the immediate vicinity of the town, with wheat, barley, and trefoil, and, further on, with halfah grass and copses of tamarisk. The view of the Sea of Mœris, with its wild picturesque shore, was now peculiarly grand. Equalling in breadth the Lake of Geneva, between Rolles and Thonon, but differing in its accessories from everything in Europe, it seemed to have been created for the purpose of awakening in the mind the spirit of poetry. Alpine peaks with glaciers and eternal snows, are here not found, to rouse and elevate the imagination; but in their stead, something no less sublime, no less calculated to suggest lofty and ennobling trains of thought, to carry the mind beyond the limits of the every-day world, and, by rendering it conversant with the stupendous aspect of nature, in the burning, boundless Desert, the sun-scorched mountain, the abandoned plain, the unnavigated wave, to induce a habit of contentment and serenity, images of a novel character, and a love of whatever is gifted with the irresistible attributes of beauty. Towards the east, the opposite shore is low, consisting of a series of undulating sand-hills, which, as the eye turns westward, give place to rocky eminences, rising gradually into mountains, barren and wild, extending westward to the extreme verge of the horizon. Between this arid chain and the traveller who contemplates it from the verdant plains of the Fayoom, lies the Lake of Mœris, which, on the morning of our visit, glittered in the sun like a sea of molten silver, and, neither of its extremities being visible, seemed to be of interminable extent. After pausing some time to enjoy the distant prospect, we alighted from our camels, and, leaving them to browse upon the plain, walked down to the beach, which I approached with more true pleasure than I had anywhere else experienced in Egypt. Though a cool breeze, blowing across the lake, somewhat

* See Wilkinson.

tempered the heat of the sun, it was fortunately not sufficient to chill the atmosphere, the temperature of which greatly exceeded that of July in Europe. Everything, therefore, contributed to augment our enjoyment. Absolute solitude prevailed on all sides. Our camels and attendants being concealed from sight by copses and thickets, and the distant villages,—here exceedingly few,—by lofty woods, nothing presented itself to the eye which could suggest a reference to human society. Enormous flights of aquatic birds—pelicans, wild-ducks, gulls, petrels, and white ibises—were here seen, some rising, others lighting on the shores, or swimming on the lake. Of these great quantities are taken by hooks attached to long lines, that are stretched at intervals over the surface. I saw a large black fowl with a sharp serrated bill, caught in this manner, and two fish, called Shillbee Beeri, with flat heads, and beards, or whiskers, six or seven inches long, which were said to be very fine, and were nearly a yard in length.* In the grass, almost under our feet, were numerous coveys of partridges; and, when we had reached the beach, both sight and smell were struck by prodigious numbers of dead fish, which having, as the natives afterwards informed us, recently perished through cold, had been driven on land by a tempestuous north wind. The quantity was incredible, lining the shore in heaps as far as the eye could reach, as if a multitude of fishermen had just emptied their nets there. They were exceedingly varied in form and size; some measuring nearly five feet in length, and of more than proportionate thickness,—and of these many hundreds lay among the smaller fry upon the mud,—while others were no bigger than a herring. In general the largest were closest to the water, the smallest, in many instances, having been carried by the waves twenty or thirty yards inland. The stench arising from so great a quantity of fish putrefying in the sun was almost insupportable, and must have communicated a pestilential quality to the atmosphere.

According to Diodorus, the species of fish caught in this lake anciently amounted in number to twenty-two. I did not count those we saw, but should certainly have supposed there were many more. Sir Gardner Wilkinson thinks that the fish of Lake Mœris are identical in kind with those of the Nile, though greatly superior in flavour. His opinion may possibly be correct, but among all the fish caught in the river I never saw any at all resembling the larger species which I have found upon the beach, nor did I ever meet with any person who had seen such. The fisheries of this lake are exceedingly productive, and abundantly supply the whole markets of the Fayoom.

Like that of the canals, the lake fishing is farmed by the government to some rich inhabitants of the district, who are usually Copt Christians; and the fish, as in former times, are either taken fresh to the market, or are dried and salted, as Diodorus observes in his notice of the lake, though the number of persons engaged in this occupation bears a very small proportion to that of former times. This custom of farming the fisheries was probably derived by the Arab government from their predecessors. It does

* Colonel Howard Vyse.

not, however, seem to have been adopted at their first occupation of the country, since the Arab historian, El Makrisi, who wrote in the fourteenth century of our era, mentions it as a new idea. It may here be observed, that Lake Mœris lies about a hundred feet below the level of the Nile,* and that its waters could never have risen to a much greater height than at present, since we find the remains of ancient buildings close to the shore. As soon as we gained a practicable part of the beach, my companion, impatient of the heat, bathed in the lake; while I contented myself with tasting the water, and strolling along the shore. Whatever may be its depth towards the middle, Mœris is extremely shallow near the land; it being necessary, on this part of the coast, to advance several hundred yards before one can swim. I found the water of a brackish taste, though not to the degree mentioned by Pococke, who thought it "almost as salt as the sea." As far as we proceeded, the quantity of fish upon the beach continued undiminished; so that the account furnished by the priests to Herodotus, of the value of the fisheries of Lake Mœris, does not seem to have been exaggerated; for, judging by appearances, they would furnish food to half Egypt. All this part of the shore is adorned with slender tamarisk bushes, covered, in many cases, with red catkins, like the willow, which, drooping and waving over the water, render the beach highly beautiful. The boat that formerly conveyed persons to the opposite shore had long been destroyed; but an Arab, who lived some leagues farther to the west, was said still to possess a small bark, which might easily be hired. In the present state of the country, however, covered with marauding Moggrebyns, and rebel camps, it was judged unsafe to venture far from the camels and luggage; and we had very soon reason to congratulate ourselves on our determination.

Other travellers visiting the Fayoom at a more propitious moment, have crossed Lake Mœris and examined the ruins of towns and temples scattered on its western shores. Belzoni in particular was most fortunate in his visit. He found the province in peace, and the poor people eager to attend him for the smallest reward. Still it was not without some difficulty that he procured a boat, which he describes as so ancient and rickety that it might probably have served Charon himself to convey the corpses of the Egyptians to their last resting-place. The Roman traveller, full of the theories which prevailed in his day, discovered everywhere proofs that this was the original scene of the fable of Charon ferrying over the shades to Hades.

The bark was entirely out of shape. The outer shell or hulk was composed of rough pieces of wood, scarcely joined and fastened by four other pieces, bound together by four more across, which formed the deck. No tar or pitch had been used, either inside or without, and the only thing

* Monsieur Linant de Bellefonds has written an elaborate and voluminous memoir to prove that the Birket-el-Karoon is not the Lake Mœris of the ancients, which he places on a part of the Fayoom, now dry, in the vicinity of Medinet. He argues the point with much ingenuity, though his reasoning scarcely, perhaps, produces conviction. This, however, is not the place to enter into such discussions; otherwise it would perhaps be possible to bring forward quite as many and as weighty arguments, and possibly a little more accurate learning, to prove Lake Mœris and the Birket-el-Karoon to be identical.

which prevented the water entering through the seams was a kind of weed. "Having," says Belzoni, "made an agreement with the owner, who resembled the pilot of the Stygian flood, we put on board some provisions and made towards the west, where the famous Labyrinth was supposed to have been situated. The water of the lake was now drinkable, owing to the extraordinary overflow of the Nile, which surmounting all the high lands, and in addition to the Bahr Yusuf, poured in such torrents into the lake that it raised its level twelve feet higher than ever it had been remembered by the oldest fisherman. We advanced with our old Baris, towards the West, and at sunset saw the shore quite deserted, there remaining nothing to look at save the lake and the mountains on the north. The pilot lighted a fire, while his companion went to fish with a net, and soon returned with sufficient for our supper. The land we were now in had anciently been cultivated, as there appeared many stumps of palm and other trees nearly petrified. I observed also the vine in great plenty. The scene here was beautiful: the silence of the night—the beams of the radiant moon shining on the still water of the lake—the solitude of the place—the sight of our boat—the group of fishermen—the temple which bears the name of Old Charon, a little way off, reminded me of the Lake Acheron, the boat Baris, and the old ferryman of the Styx. I perceived this was the very spot where the poet originated the fable of the passage of the souls over the river Oblivion. Nothing could be more pleasing to my imagination than being so near the Elysium, perhaps on the very Elysium itself. I thought that the plants which appeared nearly petrified, were the very ones amongst which the souls were enjoying the happiness of their purity. I strolled along the banks of the lake in solitary musing, not unlike one of these wandering souls waiting its turn to cross the Styx, while my old Charon, with his semi-demons, was preparing supper. I thought that night one of the happiest of my life, and imagined myself out of the reach of evil mortals. Happy in the Elysian Fields, I feared not the malice and treacherous arts of envy, jealousy, spite, revenge, nor the thousand other snares of man. I nearly forgot I was living; and I suppose that, had I continued in my ecstacy, I should have proved that these waters have the power of oblivion. Next morning before sunrise we entered the old Baris, and steered towards the west, till we arrived near the end of the lake, which, according to these fishermen, now extended further than they ever remembered it, in consequence of the above extraordinary inundation. We landed here, and I took two of the boatmen and set off for the temple called Kasr-el-Karoon, about three miles distant, standing in the midst of a ruined town, the foundations of whose walls are still to be seen, along with the substructures of several houses and small temples. There are also fragments of columns and blocks of stone. The temple, in tolerable preservation, is constructed in a style different from that of the Egyptians. No hieroglyphics are painted on the walls, and only two figures, which may be those of Osiris and Ammon. Part of the town is covered with sand. Towards the east there is a something like a gateway in an octangular form, and at a little distance a Greek chapel elevated on a platform, with cellars under it. In visiting this ruin I was near becoming the

breakfast of an hyena; for having left my arms behind, I was about to mount the flight of steps, when the fierce animal, rushing forth from the apartments beneath the chapel, darted past me. He had evidently been himself alarmed, but perceiving that I carried no weapon, was on the point of returning to the attack, when he was scared away by the shrieks of the terrified Arabs, after having shown us its pretty teeth, and treated us to one of its loudest roars. Whatever remains of beauty were to be seen in this town, it could not have been the site of the famous Labyrinth. The Labyrinth was a building of three thousand chambers, one half above and one half below the surface of the earth. Such an immense edifice would probably have bequeathed to us sufficiently numerous fragments to determine where it had stood; but not a trace of any such a building is anywhere to be seen. The town was about a mile in circumference, with the temple in its centre, so I cannot see how the Labyrinth could be placed in this situation. I accordingly left the place, and on my return towards the lake passed a tract of land which had once been cultivated, and saw a great many stumps of plants almost burnt. On my reaching the shore, a high wind arose from the south-west, and greatly agitated the waters, drifted the sand in the air, and stranded our boat. There being plenty of wood, we lighted a fire, and passed the night under shelter of a mat suspended over two sticks fixed in the ground. In the morning, the wind having abated, we again embarked, and shaped our course northward along the coast the whole day. In several parts we observed great quantities of weeds growing from beneath the waters, among which game greatly abounded.

"The pelican is here as common as on the Nile. There are also many wild-ducks, and a kind of large snipe. Next morning the boatmen, being tired of the expedition, resolved to recross the lake. I had somewhere read, however, that there existed the ruins of a town near this spot, and shortly after daybreak set out alone in search of it. The Arabs immediately ran after me, observing that there was nothing to be seen save a few ruined houses and a high wall. But this was enough for me. I determined to proceed, and they, after exhibiting the usual amount of obstinacy, consented to go along with me. Having passed a narrow strip of bushes, where the slots of leopards and of antelopes were visible, we ascended a steep ridge, on which there had evidently been vineyards, as the remains were to be perceived struggling through the sand, that now covers the extensive ranges of desert mountains to such a depth, that their rocky summits are the only objects perceptible in the undulating waste. As the sand is deep and drifted, it is impossible, without very extensive excavations, to determine what was the former surface of the country; but it is evident that the part next the water had been cultivated, and that the ancient town we came to visit had been placed to great advantage; and that before the plains and mountains between it and the lake had been overwhelmed with the vast body of sand, had it commanded a magnificent prospect of the lake, from which it is not three miles distant, and of the fertile province on the eastern shore. On reaching the summit of a low range of hills, I discovered the ruins of a town not far distant. This must have been the city of Bacchus, which I have seen marked on many ancient maps. There are a great number of houses half tumbled

down, and a high wall of sunburnt bricks, which incloses the ruins of a temple. The houses are detached, and arranged irregularly, and divided from each other by straggling lanes, narrow as those of Cairo. The temple, which faces the south, is approached by a causeway, constructed with large stones, and extending all the way from the town. In the centre of the city I observed several houses underground, roofed with beams of wood, with layers of canes, clay, and bricks, so that one might walk over without perceiving that he was treading on the top of a house. As the fishermen had brought their hatchets, I caused two or three of these houses to be uncovered, and found a fireplace in every one of them. They were not more than ten or twelve feet square, and the communication to each house was by a narrow lane, not more than three feet wide, which was also covered." Mr. Belzoni was at a loss to understand why these subterranean habitations had been constructed. It could not, he thought, have been for coolness, since they must have had all the force of the sun upon them without the slightest chance of a breath of wind. Probably, however, they were only the underground floors of the ordinary dwellings, built, ats in Affghanistan and elsewhere in the East, to be occupied during the great heats of summer, being kept cool by the shelter of the superincumben structure.

"The houses above-ground were constructed in a manner somewhat different from any I had seen before. Few had a second floor, and those which were higher than the rest were very narrow, so that they resembled towers rather than common houses; but now there is scarcely one to be seen entire. As to the temple, it is fallen, but appears to have been pretty extensive. The blocks of stone are of the largest size, some eight and nine feet long. The ruins are in such confusion, that it is impossible to form an idea of its plan or foundation. I am almost certain, by what I could see, that the falling of this temple was caused by violence, as it appears to me that it never could have been so dilapidated by the slow hand of time. Among these blocks I saw the fragments of statues, of breccia and other stones of Grecian sculpture, but no granite; and I observed the fragment of one which appeared to me not unlike part of an Apollo. There were also fragments of lions of grey-stone, not belonging to these mountains. The town, from what I could see, might have consisted of five hundred houses, the largest of which was not more than forty feet square. The area of the wall which surrounded the temple is a hundred and fifty feet square, thirty feet high, and eight feet thick. On the north side of this town is a valley, which appears to have been once cultivated, but at present is covered with sand. On inquiry, I found this town was known to the Arabs of the lake under the name of Denay. We returned to the boat, and crossed to the island of El Hear, which is entirely barren, and no trace of any habitation anywhere to be seen." *

Thus far Belzoni and Vyse. To return to our own narrative:—Having remained some time on the beach, we were joined by our guide and attendants, who had been left with the camels, and now appeared uneasy at our delay. But as they stated no reasons, we paid little attention to their disquietude, which might arise from mere impatience; at

* Belzoni. Colonel Howard Vyse.

length, observing that the day was far spent, and no new object of curiosity presenting itself, we quitted the lake, and began to retrace our steps towards Sanhoor. To the left were many Bedouin encampments, near which several troops of cavalry had been seen passing to and fro during the day; nevertheless, as they had hitherto abstained from offering us any molestation, we began to imagine that it might, after all, be possible to effect our retreat out of the province without meeting with any difficulty. We had not, however, proceeded above a mile, before a small body of horse, armed with muskets and lances, issuing from among the date-woods, made towards us at full gallop. Our Mahazi guide, who first perceived them, without exhibiting the slightest sign of trepidation, though quite unarmed, requested us to ride close together; trotting on as if we saw them not, but keeping our fire-arms in our hands, cocked ready for action. My dromedary being a female, big with young, and greatly fatigued by the violent manner in which we had travelled, now lagged in the rear; so that had not my companion slackened his pace, to allow me time to come up, I might have been easily cut off from the rest of the party. When the Moggrebyns had approached to within a few hundred yards, two horsemen, detached from the main body, advanced to question us. Galloping at full speed, they called aloud, that the Pasha's government being at an end, the Bedouins were now lords of Egypt, and that as we were partisans of the Pasha, they should make war upon and destroy us. The guides who had joined us at Sanhoor, either taking no interest in our fate, or reckoning on sharing the spoil should we be speared by the enemy, walked doggedly along without uttering a word; but the youth from Senooris, after beating my dromedary into a trot, remained behind, in order to confer with our pursuers. At first they insisted we belonged to the Pasha's service, and had been sent by that cunning despot to observe their movements and numbers, that he might know how and with what force to attack them, in the vain hope of recovering possession of the province; and that, therefore, they could not, without betraying their own cause, allow us to escape. To this our guide made answer, that we were mere travellers, whose business it was to run about the world; measuring the length and breadth of rivers, and the circumference of seas; observing the buildings which ancient nations had left behind them; and inquiring into what every man ate and drank; that, in short, we were Englishmen, who had never been known, like other Franks, to make war upon or kidnap the natives for the Pasha. The men of Sanhoor now joining in this representation, they were at length convinced we were Englishmen, who, thank God! seem to be everywhere respected for their honour and integrity. Relinquishing, therefore, their hostile design, they suffered us to proceed on our way in peace.

From the borders of the lake to Medinet el Fayoom, is between twelve and thirteen miles; and the day already drawing towards its close, we at first entertained the intention of passing the night at Sanhoor. But the inhabitants were in league with the Arabs of the Desert, a party of whom might arrive in the village,—where the Pasha possessed not a single soldier, perhaps not a single partisan,—and quietly cut us off during the night. To advance, after dark, was likewise hazardous; for our camels

being nearly knocked up, and the road intricate and intersected by canals, we might, should our guide fail us, be left to wander all night through a country infested by marauding parties, and dangerous even by day. However, having much faith in the young man, we determined to rely wholly on his fidelity, and desired him to proceed, by the nearest route, towards the capital of the province. Hitherto, we had beheld neither the rose-gardens nor the olive plantations, for which the Fayoom has always been celebrated; but, shortly after quitting Sanhoor, we entered on a country exhibiting considerable irregularity of surface, covered in many parts by groves of olive trees, extending along and shading the road. The general features of the landscape were here exceedingly beautiful, every turn of the pathway presenting a new vista, between wood and copse, over fields exquisitely green, and ending, perhaps, with the prospect of some distant village. But this part of the province, though highly fertile, is thinly peopled, the hamlets being few and distant from each other; and, as in all countries where property and life are insecure, no scattered villas, farms, or cottages, are anywhere seen. About sunset we arrived at Fedmin; where Belzoni, building, as usual, on a popular tradition, supposed the Labyrinth may have been situated. The tradition, however, relates to three hundred Christian churches,—the dream, in all probability, of some Copt;—but if we multiply three hundred by ten, we shall have three thousand, out of which there will be no difficulty in erecting a Labyrinth. Proceeding in this way, nothing can arrest our progress; tradition, in Egypt, will always be at hand, in support of any hypothesis: we shall only have to adapt them to our particular purposes. Still, it is probable that Fedmin stands on the site of some ancient town, the mounds of dust and rubbish—the constant accompaniment of an Egyptian village, among which, however, we could see no substructions, bricks, or remains of ancient buildings—being here large and more numerous than usual. A canal, with a very deep channel, but no great quantity of water, runs close to the place on the east.

Night came on shortly after. There was no moon, but the stars shone brightly, affording considerable light, by which we continued to prosecute our journey. Nevertheless, from the hesitating manner of our guide, when there were several paths branching off in different directions, it was evident, though he would not confess it, that he was but imperfectly acquainted with the way. We moreover began, as well as our beasts, to experience some fatigue, having been about fourteen hours on the road; and the idea of passing the night at some of the hamlets on the left, the situation of which we could discover by the lights burning in the cottages, at length presented itself; but while we were discussing the point and inquiring into the merits of the different villages, we met a party of Turkish soldiers, marching upon Fedmin, who said that another half hour would bring us to Medinet. Though not unacquainted with the length of an Egyptian half hour, we now abandoned the design of stopping short of the capital, and pushed on with all speed. All this part of the Fayoom is intersected in a wonderful manner by canals, which everywhere in Egypt, and more particularly in this province, present, as I have before observed, the appearance of natural rivers, possessing picturesquely wooded banks, meandering

courses, and streams of clear water, alternately deep and shallow, with a rippling current always perceptible. Along the edges of such canals, our road frequently lay over narrow foot-paths worn in the face of their lofty steep banks, where one false step would have precipitated us into the water below. The night being much too dark to pretend to guide the dromedaries, which had the same motive as ourselves for guarding against accidents, we were fain to trust to them entirely the care of our necks. No less sure-footed than the mule, they proved themselves well worthy of the confidence we reposed in them, mounting and descending the steepest eminences without slipping or stumbling. Here, we were told, the famous rose-gardens are situated; but the roses were not yet in bloom, so that, even had we not traversed the country in the dark, they would have added less to the beauty of the prospect than so many gooseberry-bushes. However, the cultivation of the rose, and the manufacture of *attar*, are still conducted on a large scale in the Fayoom, where the plantations of one European speculator occupy thirty thousand acres.

As we approached Medinet,—which, from the spot where we met with the soldiers, was more than twice the distance they stated,—the canals became larger, and the docks, sluices, and bridges more frequent. To thread the winding camel-track between the numerous arms of these vast water-works was an undertaking of some nicety, our path frequently leading over the top of a narrow causeway, thrown across extensive reservoirs; while all around was heard the noise of water falling over the dams and sluices into deep canals. At length, on arriving among the mounds encumbering its environs, supposed to mark the site of the ancient Crocodilopolis, or Arsinoe, we heard the barking of dogs in the city, and, just as the muezzin were chaunting the "Turk," or evening prayer, entered the gates; which, in all Mohammedan countries, are then closed for the night. Medinet would appear to be a populous town. The streets, when we entered, were crowded, the shops open and tolerably well lighted, indicating considerable business and activity. Our appearance excited much curiosity, and numbers of idle persons and boys followed us towards the caravanserai, where we found a good upper room to sleep in. The stairs and walls of this building contained several fragments of granite and marble, some of which were covered with hieroglyphics and Egyptian bas-reliefs. While dinner was preparing, the keeper, an old Arab of jolly, jocund countenance, paid us a visit, and related the news of the day, in the hope, apparently, of being paid in kind. According to his account, the affair with the Moggrebyns had been far more important than we had hitherto supposed: learning that marauding parties were daily pouring in from the Desert, and spreading themselves over the country, the Memour, or governor of the province, had proceeded, with all the power he commanded, towards the lake, where he found the enemy encamped. There an action took place, in which, after some loss on both sides, the Bedouins were worsted, and compelled to fly, with their wives and children, leaving their camels, cattle, sheep, &c. behind them. Upon this, as a lawful plunder, the Memour immediately made seizure, and was about to march away with them, when the Arabs, in the hope of recovering their property, attacked him suddenly, but were a second time beaten off, though not without loss

on the side of the governor; who, fearing they might once more return, in greater force, hastened with all possible celerity towards Medinet, where he arrived, with his booty, before dark, and caused the gates to be closed, after which he began to congratulate himself upon his victory. But the affair was not yet over; for about midnight, the Bedouins, who had all the way hovered at a distance in his rear, broke open the gates, entered the city in great numbers, and, by the connivance or through the terror of the inhabitants, rescued the whole of their flocks and herds, with which they departed, without committing any other act of hostility. Ashamed of his negligence, or distrustful of the disposition of the inhabitants, the governor has since that day abstained from going abroad, and still remained in voluntary confinement in his own palace; but Ahmed Pasha, late governor of the Hejaz, was said to have arrived with a large military force at Benisooef, on his way to the Fayoom; where his presence, it was expected, would speedily put a stop to the depredations and absurd hopes of the Bedouins.

Instead of remaining at the caravanserai, we repaired to the residence of Ali Dud, the Madyr. He was not in his house, but in a small square apartment on a level with and on the opposite side of the street. The room, which appeared to be his hall of audience, was crowded with Coptic secretaries, Turks, and Arabs of every description. He gave me a very civil reception; and, after the usual ceremony of coffee and pipes, we produced our firmans. When business was over, we accompanied the Madyr to his own residence. We passed through a court, in which there were several horses, and then through long passages, and a dirty staircase, to a spacious, but cold apartment, as the large windows of lattice-work were but partially covered with oiled paper. A well-grated window, over a door into the harem, afforded to its inhabitants an opportunity of observing what took place. The floor was paved with red tiles; but a carpet was laid before a low sofa, covered with cushions, and extending round two-thirds of the room. These, together with a small mirror, and a basin and ewer, constituted the furniture; and the whitewashed walls were adorned with a solitary group of three small prints of Britannia, cut out of an English shop-bill. The room was not particularly clean, although probably the best in the whole province. After pipes and coffee had been introduced, a plentiful supper was served in the usual manner; and as the Madyr, myself, my companion, and our interpreter, sat together on the floor, round a circular tray in front of the latticed-window of the harem, we must have presented an amusing spectacle to those within, whose lights from time to time appeared, although their persons could not be distinguished. The Madyr was an old man, and had been a considerable merchant, and, probably on account of his wealth, had been obliged by the Pasha to accept the government of the province. He appeared extremely credulous, but was very civil and obliging, and contributed all he could to my convenience. He remained for a considerable time after supper, and a long conversation was carried on. I then retired to the sofa, but not to sleep, owing to the quantity of gnats and of vermin with which the place abounded.*

* Colonel Howard Vyse.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM MEDINET TO BENISOOEF—PYRAMIDS OF HAWARA AND ILLAHOON.

AT Medinet, from which we departed about sunrise, our active and faithful guide from Senooris quitted us, seemingly well satisfied with the presents we made him. After accompanying us a short distance beyond the city, he struck off into a different path, leading towards his home. Of Arsinoë, or Crocodilopolis, if it really stood here, nothing now remains but heaps of rubbish, among which fragments of columns and ancient bricks are occasionally found. In the neighbourhood are situated the few vineyards which are still kept up in the Fayoom. Formerly, it is said, a good white wine was made here; but this, I believe, is no longer the case, the grapes being sent to Cairo for eating. In this city the rose-water and attar are manufactured; but as, of course, the process takes place much later in the spring, we could not witness it. Close to the walls we saw one of the rose-gardens; but the bushes being scarcely in leaf, made a very sorry appearance.

On quitting the Fayoom it may be worth while to offer a few observations on its general appearance and the condition of its inhabitants, which have already been partly illustrated in detail. This province presents a striking contrast to the alluvial plains of the rest of Egypt, as it consists of high, undulating ground, and fruit-trees, gardens of roses, and vineyards, amidst groves of olive, and of mulberry-trees, vary its appearance. The Lake Mœris presents a fine expanse of water to the westward, and beyond it is the interminable desert. The ancient canals and watercourses seem to have been constructed with great skill; and it is to be regretted that no regular survey of them exists, as it would probably show the former level of the Nile, and afford information respecting the Bahr Bela Mah, and might also lead to the discovery of the famous labyrinth, and of other celebrated remains. Yet, notwithstanding its fertility, in no part of the country is distress more apparent, or cultivation less attended to: indeed, a considerable part of the land is entirely neglected; for, besides the oppression which affects the whole country, the Bedouins, as I have mentioned, are allowed to encamp in great numbers, and their cattle are turned out amongst the crops in perfect security; whilst those of the inhabitants are obliged to be driven home every evening to the villages: and the report of firearms, shouting of men, and the continual barking of dogs during the night, show that, even there, they are not in safety. The Sheikhs of the villages connive at depredation, and keep on good terms with these savage intruders, that, in case of necessity, they may find a secure retreat amongst them. They themselves oppress and plunder the people to the last degree, not only to meet the demands of the Pasha, and to preserve an interest by bribing his officers, but also to amass treasure

for their own purposes, which they keep in a portable and available shape and ready for immediate flight whenever caprice, or other circumstances may make it expedient. The dilapidated state of the villages may, therefore, be easily imagined, but the habits of rapacity thus produced can be scarcely conceived. I saw an astonishing instance of this in crossing Lake Mœris. The boatmen, who rented the fishery from the Sheikh, brought two large fish for sale, and also a jar of fresh water for our accommodation. The Sheikh immediately seized upon the fish, and the jar, and, unless we had interfered, a scuffle would have ensued, as the poor people, to whom these objects were of value, although not intrinsically worth a piastre, were determined to defend their property.*

Pursuing our journey eastward, crossing several large canals, over bridges of stone, we hastened towards the Pyramid of Hawara; where the French, and those who have adopted their notions, place the site of the Labyrinth. Our progress, however, was slow, the country itself being a real labyrinth, where canals, ditches, morasses, small lakes,—the slender remains of the inundation,—obliged us every moment to turn out of our course, to wind hither and thither, to mount, to descend, to retrace our footsteps, until at length, when our patience was nearly exhausted, we found ourselves near the pyramid. But at this point we were completely stopped, having got entangled in a swamp, from which there appeared no way of extricating ourselves. Our excellent old Bedouin, now our only guide, having never been in this part of the country, the whole day might probably have been wasted in wandering about the delusive bogs, had we not at length discovered a peasant in the fields, whom we tempted, by the promise of a few piastres, to abandon his labour, and become our guide. By his aid we traversed the bed of the great arm of the Bahr Yusuf, by which, at the season of the inundation, the waters of the Nile are conducted into Lake Mœris, and diffused in innumerable smaller streams over the province, which they fertilise and beautify. In several parts of the channel, now dry, we observed immense quantities of oyster-shells, bright and shining like mother-of-pearl; and excellent oysters, of a particular kind, are caught among the ponds and lagoons, in different parts of the canal, where a bed sufficiently deep is afforded to the water. Having crossed the channel of the Bahr Yusuf, we arrived at a small muddy ridge, formed, perhaps, originally by the earth thrown up out of the canal, parallel with which it runs. Here we dismounted, and directing our attendants to kindle a fire among the sand-hills, and prepare breakfast, proceeded towards the pretended site of the labyrinth; having been carried, on the shoulders of our guides, over a small deep canal, running towards the north along the foot of the pyramid.

Between this branch of the Bahr Yusuf and the ruins there is a succession of mounds of considerable height; passing over which, we came to a small plain, extending northward to the foot of the Pyramid, evidently the site of some great edifice, or collection of edifices, and thickly strewed with fragments of columns, some of a very beautiful white marble, others of red

* Colonel Howard Vyse.

or blue granite. Nearly all the pillars had been clustered, like those in the hypogea of Benihassan, or in a Gothic cathedral. The surface of the plain resembles in appearance the top of a town overwhelmed by the sand, where the roofs have fallen in, where the walls have been entirely buried, and where pits and slight undulations alone mark the spot, and suggest the idea that human habitations once existed below. But if the Labyrinth was here situated, the fifteen hundred chambers erected or excavated beneath the surface of the soil must still remain; for it is incredible that buildings of such dimensions and solidity, surrounded and supported by the earth, should have wholly disappeared; yet nothing of the kind has been found, though the pits and hollows above described are evidently the burrows of antiquarians, who, in default of hieroglyphics, are compelled to seek the more unequivocal testimony of architectural monuments. Numerous shells, glittering like pearl, and almost calcined by the sun, lie scattered over the sand-heaps among the fragments of ruins. Having minutely examined the scanty remains discoverable above ground, we proceeded to ascend the Pyramid, by a steep narrow track at the south-west angle, winding upwards through heaps of loose bricks and earth, which slide down from beneath the feet. On reaching the top, formerly fortified by the Arabs, we enjoyed an immense prospect over the whole of this part of the Fayoom, far beyond Medinet on one side, and Illahoon on the other, across rich green plains, alternating with sandy deserts. At a little distance towards the east, we observed a small Bedouin encampment, and several scattered parties of Arabs toiling beneath the scorching sun over the waste. Running nearly east and west, between the cultivated country and the sands, were several canals with high banks of earth; but nothing worthy the name of a hill was anywhere visible. The Pyramid has been opened on the northern side, where a deep ravine, extending from top to bottom like a torrent bed, has been produced by the slovenly excavators. An adit and chambers are said to have been discovered; but the bricks, descending in heaps, and crumbling in their fall, have once more choked up the entrance, and rendered a second excavation necessary. I have nowhere seen larger bricks than those used in the construction of this Pyramid, which are seventeen inches in length, eight in breadth, and four and a half in thickness; but, being merely sun-dried, they easily crumble away, and the Pyramid, already almost reduced to a shapeless heap, will, in a short time, appear only as an immense barrow. I examined several of these bricks in the hope of finding a cartouche, by which the date and origin of this ancient building, and probably, by inference, that of the canal, might be discovered. But although many, no doubt, exist in the midst of such a quantity of materials, I could only find the usual marks of a hand having been drawn over the reverse sides. High mounds, which seem to be the ruins of a Peribolus surround the Pyramid on all sides.*

On descending to the plain, we walked round the structure, close to the northern face of which are the remains of an Arab village, erected with

* Colonel Howard Vyse.

the spoils of the Egyptians; but this also has long fallen to decay, the sands of the Desert now creeping over the walls, while all around there is the silence of death. Returning by the way we had come, and breakfasting among the sand-hills on the banks of the canal, we were about to depart, when we observed an Arab reconnoitring our movements from the top of the Pyramid. He had probably intended to offer his services as a guide, but arrived too late. Our road now lay along the edge of the Desert, sometimes passing over a series of lofty mounds, or a raised causeway, running parallel with the great arm of the Bahr Yusuf, which branches forth from the main canal a little to the east of Illahoon. This great artificial river, probably the work of Mœris, having been long neglected, is rapidly filling up. It was now in a great measure dry, but when filled during the inundation with water, must present the appearance of a noble river, rather than of a canal, since in some parts it cannot fall far short of four or five hundred yards in breadth. The road between Medinet and Benisooëf appears to be well frequented. All the morning we were constantly passing or meeting with small parties of peasants, some driving camels or asses laden with wood to the Fayoom, others proceeding with the produce of their lands Nilewards. In many places the banks of the canals are shaded by fine tall willows, which we found the peasants busily employed in cutting; but what use they make of them I could not learn.

The Pyramid of Illahoon was already in sight ere we quitted that of Hawara; but, owing to the sinuosities of the way, which seemed sometimes to approach, sometimes to recede from the desired point, it was nearly twelve o'clock before we arrived opposite to where it stands. Here we dismounted from our camels, which exhibited signs of great fatigue, and leaving them to browse on the coarse prickly plants growing upon the skirts of the Desert, walked towards the Pyramid, across the burning sand, between huge fragments of rock, many of which bore evident marks of the chisel, and through low hollows, where the sun's rays, concentrated and reflected from the earth, were literally scorching. Of more intense heat than this I can form no conception: the rocks and sands were kindled by the sun, so that we seemed to be walking over the fresh cinders of a volcano. Every object around being clothed with insufferable splendour by the dazzling light, descending like a flood upon the Desert, it was necessary to advance with half-closed eyes; and from a long journey over a region of this kind, with no other covering for the head than the Turkish cap, which I then wore, ophthalmia, if not blindness, would inevitably ensue. On drawing near the Pyramid, we observed a striking peculiarity in its appearance: between the dark unburned bricks, with which it seems to be constructed, we could perceive, on every side, immense blocks of stone projecting through the casing. This circumstance leading me to reflect more maturely on the subject, I was convinced by the observations I afterwards made, that the majority, if not the whole of the Pyramids, are merely small natural hills faced with masonry. To a certain extent, we know this to be the case with that of Cheops, in which the living rock is visible in the interior. At Sakkarah, likewise, the same advantage has

been taken of a large rocky nucleus furnished by nature; so that, in the erection of these vast temples of Venus, the Egyptians would appear to have done nothing more than build round a number of those conical hillocks of stone, which are so numerous in this part of the Libyan Desert, adding to their bulk and height, and fashioning them so as to represent on all sides the mystic Delta, in whose honour they were constructed. We may thus also account for the seemingly fortuitous manner in which the Pyramids are scattered over the face of the waste, and for their remarkable proximity to each other, in the case of those at Ghizeh. Herodotus relates that Asychis, desirous of surpassing his predecessors, not by the grandeur or magnificence of his public works, but by the difficulties which he knew how to overcome, erected a pyramid of bricks made with mud drawn up by poles from the bottom of the lake; and that he commemorated his silly achievement on a stone in the face of the Pyramid. If the lake intended in this passage was that of Mœris, or the Bahr Yusuf—which seems to have been not unfrequently confounded with the lake—then the Pyramid of Asychis may be that of Illahoon, or of Hawara; though the inscription nowhere appears. By compelling the people to labour, however, on works of this kind, to the neglect of agriculture and commerce, Asychis reduced his subjects to great poverty and misery; so that, in order to raise money for their subsistence, they were, in many cases, compelled to pawn the dead bodies of their parents. Like the Haràm-el-Kedâb, the Pyramid of Illahoon springs up almost perpendicularly from a conical base, and having attained a certain elevation, slopes rapidly to a point. Originally, therefore, it was not possible to ascend to its summit; but by the industry of the Arabs, a path has been formed on its southern face, leading in a zig-zag direction to the top. Dénon considers this the most dilapidated of all the Pyramids of Egypt; but it is, perhaps, less ruinous than that of Hawara; and in the Desert near Dashour and Sakkarah, there are several structures of this kind already reduced to the shape and appearance of barrows. No attempt seems to have been made to open a passage into the interior, though it probably contains chambers, like the other Pyramids; but on the sand, all around its base, we observed the tracks of numerous wheeled carriages, which we found, upon examination, had been employed in carrying away stones cut from the north-east corner of the hill, on which it has been erected; so that in all probability it will shortly be undermined and totally overthrown. The stones thus obtained would appear to be used in the public buildings and sluices on the Bahr Yusuf.

On the edge of the desert near this spot, there was another Bedouin encampment. In the course of the morning we had ridden through two or three similar clusters of tents, the inhabitants of which always greeted us civilly as we passed; but in no instance were we invited to stop, or enter their dwellings, though accompanied by a Bedouin. The appearance of these encampments inspired me with a favourable idea of the nomadic life. Arranged in the form of a half-moon, with their doors, if they may be so called, all turned towards the east, the tents stood sufficiently near each other for the purpose of good neighbourhood, though separated by a

space through which their cattle might pass to and fro; while the whole area inclosed between the horns of the crescent, in most cases covered with short grass, formed a sort of lawn, or play-ground for the children of the camp, where they would always be under their mother's eye. No litter or filth of any kind polluted the neighbourhood of their dwellings. Great happiness and freedom may certainly be enjoyed in a life of wandering, like that of the Bedouins, when the tribe numbers sufficient young and vigorous members to render it feared or respected by its enemies. All the affections are brought properly into play; the physical powers are exercised without being exhausted; and the mind, though deprived of the aids and incentives to exertion supplied by European civilisation, and abandoned more to its own

Arab Story-teller.

resources, finds in the romances of the story-teller and a certain rich and irregular poetry, pleasures which more cultivated intellects would not, perhaps, disdain to share. The tents are low, but spacious and airy, having at each end something resembling a chimney, designed for the admission of cool air, which spoils, however, the appearance of the whole. Like the *abbas*, or outer-garment of the men, they are made of a brown and white cloth, the stripes of which are from a foot and a half to three feet in width; but, while the former are of cotton or wool, these are manufactured of camel's hair. By day they are entirely open on one side, so as to expose the whole of the interior, even the part inhabited by the women; for the Bedouins entertain few of those prejudices respecting the sex which prevail in most parts of the East. Being themselves free, they allow their wives and

daughters to enjoy the same liberty, which is very rarely abused. In personal charms, the women of the desert are greatly superior to those of the cultivated country; possessing more delicate features, bright eyes, and countenances indicative of great intelligence and vivacity: though I saw none of those beautiful girls described by some travellers, whose judgment in these matters was not, perhaps, sufficiently exercised; for, according to European notions, all the Bedouin women are deficient in that softness, harmony, and elongation of features indispensable to female beauty. In them, as among the men, the characteristic national type is remarkably unvaried; for though, of course, differences in complexion and countenance may be observed, they seem, upon the whole, like the members of one immense family. Both sexes are tattooed,—the men on the arms; the women both on the arms and chin,—with the figures of flowers or stars, or some other fanciful ornament. In every respect these small encampments looked highly interesting; for, though a number of the men were absent with their flocks and herds, enough remained to confer an air of life and activity upon the scene.

I have already observed that the heat of the sun, in the sands near the pyramid, was exceedingly powerful, rendering walking a laborious task; but the moment we mounted our dromedaries, and put them in motion, there again appeared to be an agreeable coolness in the air. In the desert, the camel possesses many decided advantages as a saddle animal over the horse; for, in addition to those arising from the peculiarity of its construction, and its capacity to endure privation and fatigue, it places the rider so high above the ground, that the reflection of the sun's rays, nearly intolerable on foot, is scarcely at all felt, while an agreeable freshness is kept up in the air by the rapidity of its movements. Turning off towards the right, we crossed the bed of the canal of Illahoon, over a long causeway, where wall after wall has been thrown across the channel, for the purpose of retaining water for irrigation; and the ponds and reservoirs thus formed were still far from being exhausted. Proceeding towards the east, we in a short time arrived at a noble bridge of many arches, thrown across the Bahr Yusuf, and intended, not for the use of the peasant or traveller desirous of traversing the canal, but to regulate the quantity of water admitted into the Fayoom during the inundation; for which purpose each arch is furnished with a kind of portcullis, which can be lowered or raised, in proportion as more or less water is wanted. This is one of the useful works of the Pasha; and its design and execution are highly creditable to the architect. A small village containing several public buildings in a state of forwardness, occupies the bank of the canal at the southern extremity of the bridge, erected a little to the east of some ancient water-works, apparently of more massive but less tasteful construction. Returning over the bridge, which we had crossed by mistake, we proceeded along the northern bank of the Bahr Yusuf towards Benisooëf.

During the whole of this journey, from the time of our quitting the river at Ghizeh, we had drunk bad and sometimes brackish water, and I now longed with an earnestness indescribable, to reach Benisooëf, that I might again drink pure water. It is a saying among the Arabs, that whoever

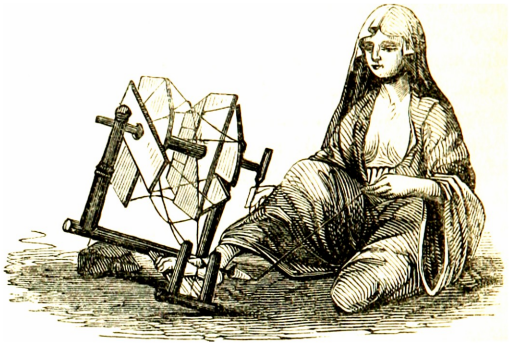
has once tasted of the Nile, can never wholly abandon the Sacred Valley, but, wherever he may wander, will some time or another return to Egypt, drawn thither by the magical attraction of its river: and I pardon the Arabs for their enthusiasm, for on this day, though surrounded by canals, the water of the Nile appeared to me like that fountain for which David thirsted,—more desirable than milk or honey;—and, as I rode across the wide plain which separated me from them, I beheld with extreme impatience the village groves coming in sight, one after another, informing me I was still far from the river. At length, however, early in the afternoon, the white minarets of Benisooëf, glittering among the deep verdure of the date-palms, appeared in the distance, inspiring me with delight, for I knew that the Nile flowed at their feet; but while I was enjoying, by anticipation, the luxury of quenching my thirst with pure water, myriads of winged ants, arising from the earth and stagnant pools, settled on our faces, shoulders, and hands, buzzing and stinging like bees. Their numbers were incredible. We appeared to each other like moving ant-hills; for though we swept them off and killed them by thousands, until they stunk like putrid flesh, about our hands and clothes, the swarm never seemed to be diminished, until, on our arrival at Benisooëf, they were killed with a besom in the court of the caravanserai. On reaching the city, unusual bustle and activity were observable in the streets, now so crowded that our dromedaries had scarcely room to put their feet upon the ground without trampling on some person. The cause soon appeared. Ahmed Pasha, with a division of the Egyptian army, had just arrived from the Hejaz, and the soldiers, previous to their march into the Fayoom against the Moggrebyns, were spreading themselves through the city, snatching in haste the coarse pleasures within their reach. All the dancing-girls, singers, and musicians, were consequently employed: and we found the caravanserai so entirely occupied by this military rabble, that not a single apartment could be obtained. We were therefore constrained to pass the night in a kind of open shed, half-filled with sacks of corn and other merchandise. In the court, several asses and camels, besides our own, were stabled; and, had any of them felt disposed during the night to share our lodgings, there was nothing to prevent them, the floor of the shed not being elevated a foot above the yard. Here, for the use of the wayfarer, stood a large jar of Nile water, which, in comparison with what we had been compelled to drink in the Fayoom, seemed doubly sweet. There was likewise in the court a kind of coffee-house, kept by a young ragged Arab woman, who, with the camels' dung, and similar substances, which she used for fuel, raised so acrid and abominable a smoke, that we were almost driven by it out of our den. However, the poor girl, who was good-natured and obliging, voluntarily assisted our attendants, now considerably fatigued, in their culinary operations, bringing them water, attending to their fire, &c. with great alacrity. When our mattresses had been unrolled in the shed, we sat down close to the entrance, to enjoy the curious spectacle which the motley groups, constantly entering or quitting the caravanserai, presented. Poverty and wretchedness are not always companions: more ragged devils than were here collected it would be difficult to find in any country; but they were

not, as might have been expected, distinguished by rueful countenances, and a sullen spiritless gait. On the contrary, the ease and hilarity with which they supported the weight of despotism, and contumely, and want, at first made me angry: it seemed as if they hugged their chains. But this superficial view of the subject was succeeded by reflections of a different character, and I acknowledged the wisdom and beneficence of nature, in making up for the want of freedom and its concomitant dignity, by a happy insensibility, and a disposition to catch and reflect from the speculum of the mind every enlivening ray which circumstances allow to find its way thither. Soon after we had dispatched our dinner, the great gate of the caravanserai was shut, and the sober part of its inmates retired to rest; but in the upper suite of apartments there were several boisterous Turkish soldiers, who sang, laughed, and made a great noise to a comparatively late hour. The youthful mistress of the coffee-house slept close to us, in the passage. For some time a small, dim lamp, suspended against a wall in the court, cast a gloomy light over our uncouth resting-place; but the wind blew tempestuously, accompanied with rain, which, falling in large drops on the flame, at length extinguished it, and left us in total darkness. Once or twice, when I awoke during the night, the camels and asses, incommoded by the weather, seemed very much inclined to quit the wet court, and step into our bed-chamber; but they forbore, and permitted us to maintain undisturbed possession of it until morning.

Benisooëf is a place of some consideration, with several mosques, caravanserais, and large private houses, together with an extensive well-supplied bazaar, frequented once a week by the peasants of the country round. As it happened to be market-day, this bazaar, thronged with people, formed an interesting and striking, but not a gay scene: both sellers and buyers, with but few exceptions, had an air of poverty; and among these exceptions were the officers of a regiment of cavalry, quartered in the town, whose gorgeous uniforms, glittering with gold, contrasted disagreeably with the rags which scarcely covered the nakedness of the half-starved fellahs. If you except the necessaries of life, the articles exposed for sale in an Egyptian bazaar would in general be regarded with scorn at an English fair: in an earthenware shop at Benisooëf, for example, all the articles of English manufacture consisted of one small white bason, a soup-plate, and a few dessert-plates of the commonest kind, most of which I bought for four piastres. In another place you see a man vending pipe-heads, whose whole stock might be purchased for five shillings; yet he gets his living, such as it is, by selling them. Another person has a few onions, another a small quantity of dates, a third, the most thriving person by far, is engaged in selling hot cakes mixed with butter, at ten paras each, which he bakes as you eat them. Bread every day grows cheaper as you ascend the Nile: at Benisooëf we bought, for a piastre, sixteen small cakes, as nice, though not quite so fine, as muffins; thirty-two eggs for the same money; eight small lemons, or rather citrons, for ten paras; mutton twenty-eight paras per pound; butter and milk, both excellent, were rather dearer.

From this part of the bazaar we proceeded to that which is held among the large mounds of rubbish to the north of the town. Here we observed

a more lively scene. On one side, near an old wall, were a number of water-jars, pots, and pans, with a row of Arab women squatting down behind them, laughing and chatting with infinite glee and volubility. Near these appeared a group of female itinerant linendrapers, each with a piece of coarse linen on her lap, and in the midst of them a woman engaged in spinning the thread from which this coarse fabric is manufactured. Further on, a man with mats, another with printed cottons, and a third with carrots or other vegetables. In the midst of these, as if to shame the meanness of their humble dress, we observed a number of cavalry officers, in their rich variegated costume, mounted on superb horses, dashing up the steep mounds, then down again, checking their fiery steeds in mid-gallop. Their principal commander, dressed in a magnificent scarlet cloak, embroidered vest, and costly shawl, with a fine horse and sabre, appeared, from his luxuriant carrotty mustachios, to be some German renegade; though, on the day before, I had seen an Arab with a red beard, and even mummies have been found with hair of this colour. A large building, with numerous glass windows and green blinds, situated at the northern entrance to the town, is one of the Pasha's abandoned cotton manufactories, now converted into a hospital. One of the principal mosques of the city has been undermined by the Nile, which, unless artificially dammed off, will soon wash away the whole town. The great sugar plantations of Egypt commence a little to the north of Benesooëf, and these, together with the Dhourra, seem to occupy all the industry of the inhabitants, there being fine fields of tobacco, wheat, and cotton, and indigo plantations. Sucking the raw sugar-cane is a great luxury with the Arabs; and, in reality, the juice has a pleasant taste.



Female Spinning.

Arab servants of Europeans generally behave very insolently towards their countrymen. This morning, in the bazaar, my Arab took an old man by the beard, because he laughed at him for offering too little for his goods; and struck another person in the face, for daring to speak, no doubt, impertinently about the article which he was buying. He depended upon the respect which is everywhere shown to the English: alone, he would not have dared to act thus for his life. Reprimands, however, have very little effect in checking his passions; for as often as the occasion presents itself, the fault is repeated.

CHAPTER XV.

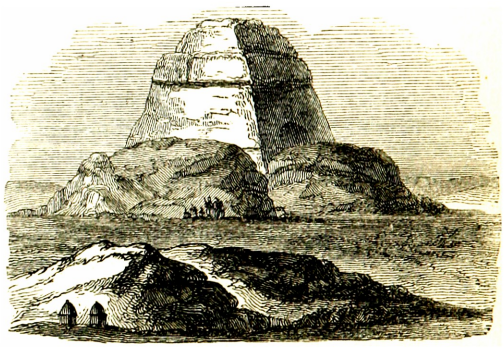
THE HARAM-EL-KEDAB—PYRAMIDS OF SAKKARAH—BIRD MUMMY PITS.

QUITTING Benisooëf at an early hour, and turning the heads of our dromedaries northwards, we proceeded gently along the banks of the Nile. The sky was overcast, and a slight sprinkling of rain fell as we entered on the plain; so that, judging from our northern experience, we looked for nothing less than a perpetual succession of heavy showers. As far as the eye could reach, the whole face of the country was covered with verdure and signs of luxuriant fertility; beautiful fields of wheat, lupines, and beans in blossom impregnating the atmosphere with an agreeable odour. Intermingled with these were extensive patches of tall sedgy grass, used by the Egyptians in the manufacture of mats; and elsewhere large tracts remained fallow. The rain having several times commenced and blown off, at length, as we drew near Boosh, began to fall heavily, rendering the paths slippery for the camels, and drenching us to the skin. This rich and populous village is approached by a fine long avenue of Mimosa trees, which, embowering the road, afforded us some shelter, and in the surrounding fields and paddocks, were numerous herds of buffaloes and kine. Halting at the caravanserai, at some distance from the village, by some supposed to have been the Ptolemais of the ancients,* we kindled a fire in one of the courts, and, notwithstanding the rain, ate our breakfast in the other, the interior having been defiled by some dirty Arab. Here we saw pass an immense train of camels, intermingled with dromedaries, amounting to upwards of a thousand: a great number were unladen, and several, of enormous bulk and stature, shuffling along like so many elephants. While proceeding at his natural pace in a line after many others, or when ridden by a person to whom he is accustomed, the dromedary is certainly a docile animal; but remove him out of these circumstances, put a stranger on his back, endeavour to compel him to travel abreast with another, or drive him through a bean or corn-field, without permitting him to stop and eat, and he grows savagely unruly, roars, snatches at the food, or suddenly throws himself upon the ground, to the imminent danger of the rider's neck. I have frequently seen these tricks played by a very good dromedary, which, though sufficiently tractable in the desert, where there was nothing to rouse his appetite, annoyed and impeded us perpetually in the cultivated country.

From Boosh we proceeded northward to the village of Maydoon, where, instead of pursuing the ordinary route, we turned to the left towards the false Pyramid, which had been long visible, sometimes presenting the appearance of a prodigious tent on the edge of the verdant horizon; some-

* Pocock, Description of the East.

times dwindling, from the undulations of the ground, to an insignificant cone, or disappearing entirely behind the larger eminences. Occasionally we were conducted, by a bend in the road, into its immediate vicinity; but pursuing the sinuosities of the path, winding hither and thither, according to the position of the different hamlets, it again receded, seeming to fly our approach, like the unreal waters of the desert: and from this circumstance it may have been denominated by the Arabs, the false or delusive Pyramid, though others derive the name from its being only in part of the pyramidal form. Our progress across the cultivated country, where no paths of any kind exist, was much impeded by extensive corn-fields, which could not be traversed without inflicting considerable injury on the proprietors. The Bahr Yusuf skirting the desert, whose encroachments and devastations it limits and confines, is now, by the neglect of government, reduced, during the hot season, to a chain of small shallow ponds, in many places miles asunder. Immediately after crossing the bed of this ancient canal, we emerged into the desert, and, leaving the camels to browse on the coarse prickly plants growing among the sand, ascended towards the Pyramid, over the lofty mounds irregularly situated round its base. Its appearance from a short distance is so red, that, like the other religious structures, it appears to have been painted; but the ruddy tint is in the stone, which, when broken by the hammer, discloses numerous rubiginous strata. This Pyramid differs in construction from those of Memphis, consisting of a series of square inclined towers, erected upon each other, successively diminishing in size to the summit, and originally terminating, I imagine, in a point. Each tower, however, was built completely, from the foundation to the apex, before that which encloses it like a sheath was commenced, so that the Egyptians here exhibited the utmost prodigality of expense and labour; for the masonry of this prodigious structure is so admirable, the stones are so truly squared and so exquisitely fitted in the parts intended to be concealed, no less than in those which present themselves to the eye, that it would be impossible o insert the point of a penknife between them.* Midway up the third



The False Pyramid.

* Mr. Perring conjectures that the whole was originally covered with large unsquared bricks,* so as to complete the shape of a regular pyramid; but this supposition appears to me contrary to all probability; first, because the covering of a stone building with brick, would be absurd in itself; and, secondly, because if such had been the case, some trace of the brick addition would have been discoverable about the Pyramid.

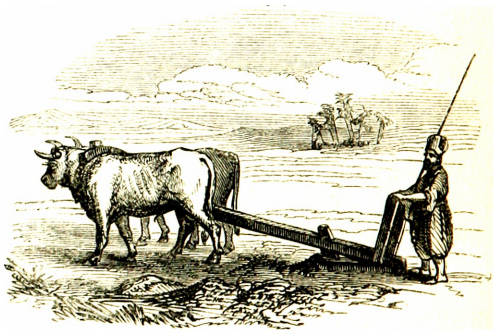
* See Norden, Pocock, and Richardson.

tower, reckoning from the base, a band of unfinished masonry, about eight feet broad, extends along each of its four faces, while all above and below is finely polished. Though the Egyptians appear always to have planed and made even their walls after they were erected, beginning in most cases from the top, and working downwards, this rough band cannot be supposed to have been accidentally left unfinished, being everywhere of the same depth, and studded with greater inequalities than would have been found on a surface intended to be smoothed. It is, therefore, probable, that it was originally covered with a fine stucco, ornamented with bas-reliefs or intaglios, and painted in the most gorgeous style observable in the temples.

Thus adorned, it would be difficult to conceive a more striking object than this vast barbaric pile, towering aloft in a transparent atmosphere, and overlooking, like a mighty fortress, the whole extent of the sacred valley. In fact, the false pyramid greatly resembles the idea which the descriptions of the ancients convey of the Tower of Belus, except that no flight of steps, running along the face of the edifice, conducts to the summit; though it may be conjectured that the central turret contains a staircase, approached by some subterranean entrance now unknown. Grand, however, as this structure is, its magnificence has not sufficed to protect it from the barbarism of the Turks, who, to obtain materials for the construction of cotton mills or barracks, have commenced the demolition of the exterior towers. An attempt has likewise been made, high in the northern face, to discover a passage into the interior; but, after considerably defacing the beauty of the Pyramid, the barbarian, who most probably was in search of treasure, relinquished his hopeless undertaking. Heaps of stones and rubbish, the spoils of the edifice, encumber the ground, and beyond these are the sand-hills of the desert, and constantly advancing their shifting bases towards the cultivated country.

In regaining the road leading from Maydoon to Riga, a considerable circuit was rendered necessary by the Bahr Yusuf, which intersected our course, and in this part still contained water. The wind, blowing almost a hurricane, and the appearance of the sky threatening rain, we hastened with all possible celerity towards the next village, intending there to pass the night; for the Mahazi Bedouin, who understood the signs of the atmosphere, predicted a sand-storm. At first, indeed, this was regarded as a false alarm; but presently, on looking towards the river, we observed that the scirocco was already in the eastern desert, whirling aloft the sands in enormous clouds, and driving them impetuously towards the north, covering the whole face of the country like a thick mist, and rising above the summits of the mountains. Behind us, and on our left, the same terrific masses were in motion. The wind blew tempestuously, and rain, though not continuous as in our climates, but descending in big, heavy, drops, like those accompanying a thunder-storm, mingled with the driving sand. The firmament became lurid, and appeared to be borne down towards the earth; the villages, the palm-groves, the mountains, were alternately hidden and revealed, and the whole landscape exhibited an

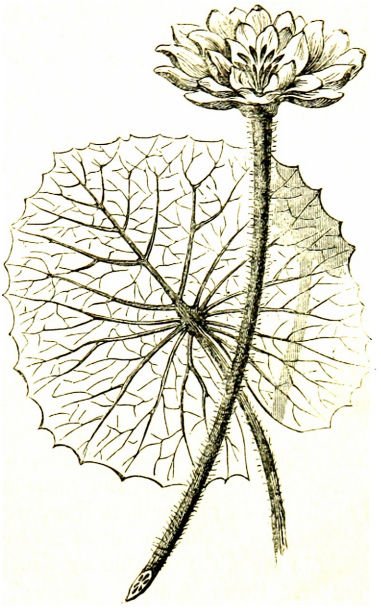
aspect of sombre grandeur well calculated to strike the imagination. Through those sand clouds, on every point of the horizon, rolling along with incredible rapidity, we continued to advance for some time, but, at length, growing impatient of pursuing the windings of the narrow path, leading from hamlet to hamlet, we diverged towards the left, in the hope, by making straight across the plain, of discovering a shorter route; instead of which, we lost our way, and went on floundering through the ditches and mire, ploughed fields and patches of desert, until the storm was past. Though much fatigued, the camels still proceeded at a brisk trot, so that, a little before nightfall, we reached the village, which, for many hours, had appeared to be flying from us. Here, close to the walls, we found a wretched caravanserai, with neither doors nor windows, but pierced with numerous air-holes, letting in the cold winds on all sides, and otherwise much dilapidated. While engaged in establishing our quarters in this tenement, the Sheik el-Beled, not, I regret to say, from motives of hospitality, invited us to his own house, where, he observed, both ourselves and our beasts would be secure from the attacks of the marauding parties which nightly overran the country. His representations were undoubtedly founded on truth, but it soon appeared that his principal motive for making them was mercenary; since, for every article of provisions he supplied us with, double the price was demanded. He was a rich man; and, before the closing of the village gates, we saw his numerous flocks and herds, camels and she-goats, and kine, driven into a strong place for safety. Here his ploughs, harrows and other implements of agriculture were carefully laid up when not in use. In the erection of that portion of his house appropriated to the use of travellers, several fragments of marble and polished granite had been employed, which renders it probable that some ancient city was situated near the spot.



Egyptian Plough.

Quitting, about sunrise, the dwelling of the sheikh, we continued our journey over a plain of extraordinary fertility and beauty. Thousands of spring flowers, red, yellow, white, purple, and blue, enamelled the greensward by the wayside, while a magnificent expanse of bright verdure extended on one hand to the Nile, on the other to the desert. Numerous mimosa-trees in blossom, budding palms and odoriferous shrubs and plants, diffused a fragrance through the air, rendered soft and balmy by the genial influence of spring. But, if the prospect of inanimate nature was exhilarating, the pleasure derived from it was frequently damped by spectacles which a

country afflicted with the plague of despotism could alone supply: troops of men, torn violently from their homes, marching away under the surveillance of foreign mercenaries; while their wives and children, menaced by penury and want, followed them with sobbing and lamentation as long as their strength would permit, and then returned, widowed and fatherless, to their villages. Poverty we had beheld in every shape, until it had ceased to excite attention; but in this rich and smiling part of the country, where nature was bountiful even to profusion, its evils seemed to us to be by that circumstance greatly aggravated. We had elsewhere seen men feeding like cattle on lupines, and trefoil, and wild herbs; emaciated women, with scarcely a rag to cover their waists, gliding like spectres through the ruined villages; and children, as naked as when born, sallow, squalid, bloated, eyeless, too young to know their danger, with no mother to guard, no father to maintain them, sitting among the rubbish, infested, during summer, with lizards, scorpions, and every noxious reptile, subsisting on the spontaneous but precarious charity of the poor.



The Lotus.

This morning the condition of the peasantry appeared more debased and humiliating than ever, for the neighbouring hamlets had been visited by a recruiting party, who, having collected a number of men, was proceeding with them towards Mitraheni: seeing that we were about to overtake them—for our camels were fleet and powerful—they hastily turned aside, and stood at a considerable distance until we had passed. Some wretched Frank was, perhaps, at their head, who, not having lost all sense of shame, thus sought, by a precipitate retreat, to avoid the finger of scorn. The female relations of the conscripts, who had probably been forcibly compelled to return, we met upon the road: a heart-stricken, sorrowful group; some absorbed in sullen grief, others weeping bitterly. Continuing our journey, we soon observed a complete shifting of the scene;—small parties of peasants, male and female, young and old, with laughing eyes and merry faces, proceeding to a fair, held at a neighbouring village. Towards this point numerous pathways converged from distant parts of the plain, and, mounted on lofty camels, we could from afar discover the various groups as

they appeared and disappeared among the scattered date-groves; several knots we overtook and passed. Some, like pedlars, were carrying their usual merchandise, the produce of their fields and gardens, to sell at the fair; others, from their being empty-handed, were evidently proceeding there to buy; but all seemed equally lively, laughing, talking, and cracking their jokes, as if Egypt contained no Pasha. The men were invariably armed, some with muskets or spears, others with those long heavy sticks, called "naboots," without which no Arab ever ventures abroad. I observed that the women always walked on foot, while the men, perhaps, were mounted on asses, and carried the children on their laps: why the women do not ride, is more than I can comprehend—it may be barbarism, it may be decency; as, without saddles or stirrups, it would be difficult for them to do so without exposing themselves. Even in Cairo, where the fair sex wear trousers, and are enveloped in ample drapery, the legs, by the awkward manner in which they sit their beasts, are frequently bared up to the knee; while the rude ass-driver, in lifting them up and down, and in preserving them in slippery places from falling, makes exceedingly free with the persons of women supposed to live retired in inviolable harems, and who, when abroad, affect scrupulously to conceal their faces.

On arriving at the bazaar, held, like an English country-fair, in a field on the outskirts of the village, we alighted under a palm-tree, and leaving our attendants to prepare breakfast, mingled among the crowd of Arabs assembled on the plain. The scene was highly characteristic; rare and costly spices from the farthest East, which could scarcely be supposed ever to find their way into the hut of an Egyptian peasant, were spread upon the grass in the midst of ordinary Venetian beads, corn, peas, beans, cheese, and butter. Rows of market-women, some with bread, others with eggs and dried dates, sat on the ground, surrounded by horses, asses, and camels, which cautiously passed to and fro, beneath their heavy burdens, without trampling on the hem of their garments. Both men and women, however, exhibited that brawling propensity which in all countries distinguishes the vulgar. The buyer and the seller, whatever might be the value of the article in question, seemed, by the loudness of their voices, and the fierceness of their gesticulations, to be engaged in mortal conflict; but when the bargain was concluded, the vociferation likewise ceased, and the disputants chatted and laughed together with their usual good humour. If a sturdy Fellah were engaged in cheapening an ass, you might behold twenty individuals of both sexes, nowise interested in the transaction, encircling the chapmen, and entering with so much earnestness into the business—some siding with the buyer, others with the seller—that a stranger would certainly suppose that they were to receive a commission on the proceeds. To a painter in search of the grotesque, these motley groups would have afforded delectable materials; for even the Neapolitan lazzaroni are less wild in their attitudes, and less whimsical in their costume, than the Arabs. Turbans, white, black, red, or green; cream-coloured, brown, or striped white and green cloaks, blue shirts, tattered blankets, which disguised rather than covered the wearer, and rags of every colour in the rainbow,

fluttering in the wind—met the eye on all sides; but the countenances of the Fellahs exhibit little variety, excepting such as results from sex or age, or different stages of famine or disease. Hungry dogs, the universal scavengers of Egypt, prowled about the bazaar, ravenously snatching up whatever was thrown to them, and seeming quite prepared to rend and devour the donors themselves.

The path, upon quitting this village, leads towards the Nile; upon which, long before the water was visible, numerous white sails appeared gliding along the green banks as if belonging to the land.

Our track now lay along the top of an elevated causeway, running parallel with the stream, and intended to protect the irrigated districts from the inundation. Here we overtook two Bedouin pedestrians, armed with muskets and bayonets, who appeared to be travelling towards Cairo. Like the generality of their countrymen west of the Nile, they exhibited in their manner an impudent familiarity, betokening what is termed, "knowledge of the world;" which signifies, that having, in their profligate career, lost all self-respect, they had likewise ceased to respect others, or the laws which make a difference between *mine* and *thine*. Entering at once into conversation with our Mahazi guide—a simple, honest man—they very quickly learned from him all the particulars on which they desired to be informed;—as, where we had been; whither we were going; which of us was treasurer, &c. The sight of our arms, however, appeared to stagger them; they, therefore, dropped behind, with the design of robbing our Caireen attendant, who always loitered in the rear; with him they used no ceremony, but began immediately to inquire what was in the saddle-bags. "Nothing but papers," he replied.—"Kafir!" they exclaimed, "it is false! Franks never travel without money. Come down, therefore, you dog! and open the bags, or we will shoot you, and burn your father!" And there can be no doubt they would in a few minutes have made themselves masters of our baggage, had we not just at the moment rode back to put an end to their conference. Upon this the Bedouins made their escape across the fields towards a small encampment, to which they perhaps belonged.

Pushing on rapidly towards Dashour, we visited and examined its several pyramids, which have nothing very peculiar in their construction, except that the largest having been commenced on a grand scale, with the evident intention of being carried to an immense height, contracts suddenly, and terminates in a blunt point.* Its entrance, as usual, is found in the northern face, about twenty-five feet from the ground. Of the other pyramids, built in the same style as those of Sakkarah, there is one which has been so completely uncovered that the hillock of earth forming the original nucleus of the structure alone remains. Leading from the valley are several causeways, the existence of which has given rise to various conjectures; for if they are admitted to have been the work of the ancient Egyptians, it will follow that the desert has not greatly encroached on the cultivated country, and that the pyramids must have been originally erected on rocks in the

* Sir Frederick Henniker.

midst of sand-hills. But, supposing them of modern date, constructed for the convenience of removing stones and bricks to be used elsewhere, the presumption would ensue, that the Pyramids were built in the valley considerably in advance of the desert. Appearances are favourable to the latter hypothesis; for the immense masses of stone which have been displaced are no longer to be seen, though the sands have not risen so high as to conceal them, did they still exist upon the spot. Without laborious and extensive operations it would, however, be impossible accurately to determine to what extent the sands of the Libyan waste have advanced eastward; but it is probable that the loss of land here sustained exceeds what has been acquired by the enlargement of the Delta.

Evening approaching, we once more descended into the valley, and proceeded towards Mitraheni. The country on which we now entered, formerly celebrated for the ruins it contained, is now distinguished only for its richness and beauty. Covered with a carpet of luxuriant verdure, and adorned at intervals with magnificent palm-forests, traversed by lofty umbrageous avenues, and peopled with echoes, it seemed to be a fragment of fairy land. Passing through Sakkarah, situated at the northern extremity of these woods, and hastening over the intervening plain, we arrived at Mitraheni, while sufficient daylight remained to enable us to examine the mounds and fragments of antiquity in its vicinity. Here, perhaps, the loftiest palm-trees in the world are found, many of them exceeding 100 feet in height; their smooth trunks resembling tall slender columns, terminating in a capital of waving leaves. The ancient remains, supposed to be those of Memphis, stand on the southern shore of a small lake, in the midst of a wood, and consist chiefly of brick substructions, overwhelmed by extensive mounds of rubbish. With the exception of one colossal statue, there is little at Mitraheni calculated to support the hypothesis, that the ancient metropolis of lower Egypt, the dwelling-place of the Pharaohs, adorned with magnificent temples aud palaces, was here situated; the traces of ruins, though widely scattered, being less considerable than in the neighbourhood of many Egyptian cities of inferior note. Nothing advanced by Pococke, Bruce, or any other traveller, with the design of invalidating the arguments of Shaw, who fixes the site of Memphis on the plains of Gizeh, is at all satisfactory; independently of the appearance of the ground, which, in my opinion, is unfavourable to their views; the scanty architectural fragments, here discovered, being of too mean and paltry a character to be allowed much weight in the discussion, which must, therefore, be conducted on other grounds.

The colossal statue above mentioned is properly a fragment, which, having been cast down, like Dagon, from its pedestal, lies upon its face, in a small hollow, opened by excavation, with the legs broken off a short way below the knees. The back has been greatly corroded by the atmosphere, and in parts wantonly defaced by violence; but the countenance, the breast, and the drapery, descending in wavy folds over the limbs, are in a state of high preservation, and enable us to judge, with some degree of precision, of the merits of Egyptian sculpture at the period when this statue was

executed. There seems to be nothing in the costume or ornaments which positively determines whether it be the effigy of a hero or a god, though, from the style of features, resembling what we observe in other Egyptian representations of divinity, where ideas of power are sought to be awakened by gigantic masses in repose, I conclude it was intended for a deity. Assuming this to be the case, a comparison may fairly be instituted between it and the creations of the Grecian chisel, likewise designed to embody the nearest possible approach to ideal beauty. It would appear to have been the aim of the artist, to exhibit in this colossus, the union of vast physical power with placidity and gentleness; but if so, he has indubitably fallen short of his mark. Instead of indomitable energy, quelled and reduced to tranquillity by the harmonising influence of a godlike intellect, we merely discover the absence of those mighty passions, in the generous manifestation of which all dignity and majesty consist. The Greeks, on the contrary, who have been supposed to borrow from the masters of this school their first notions of art, delighted, above all things, in delineating action and the play of the passions. Their statues, accordingly, are seldom or never in an attitude of repose. You perceive that they have done, are doing, or are about to do, something; and intense satisfaction, joy, solicitude, or anxiety, breathe forth from every lineament of their countenance. The Greeks, in one word, represented action; the Egyptians, inaction; and the difference may, perhaps, be philosophically accounted for, by considering the national character of each people. Like all other Orientals, the inhabitants of Egypt supposed the supreme good to consist in cessation from labour, corporeal and mental, and a certain dreamy tranquillity, in which the mind yields itself up to the sway of fantastic visions, forming impracticable schemes, and executing in idea what in real life it would shrink from attempting. Hence, according to them, rest is better than action, sleeping than being awake, and death than life. Among the Greeks, who, in this, resembled the other European nations, happiness was traced to the exertion of mental and physical energy; consequently, the pervading spirit of their plastic arts, which, wherever a distinct style of imitation exists, is merely the representative of the national character, was creative, and vivifying, and manifested itself in forms exhibiting passion and energy. The colossal statue of Mitraheni may be regarded as the type of Egyptian sculpture. Everything in its appearance is adverse to our ideas of beauty or sublimity; the forehead being low and retreating, the eyes long and sleepy, the eyebrows elongated by paint, the cheeks spare, the nose of the meanest form, exhibiting a dull curve at the point, with the cartilage between the nostrils; the mouth well formed, but expressive rather of benevolence than vigour; the chin of the negro cast;—and indeed, though the hypothesis of Volney, that the Egyptians were genuine negroes, be equally at variance with history and the testimony of existing monuments, there appears to be some ground for suspecting they were a mixed race—partly Asiatic, partly African.

Returning across the plain, in search of guides, to the Bird Mummy Pits, we directed our course towards Sakkarah. In all Egyptian villages situated

in the vicinity of ruins or catacombs, every person not more profitably employed constitutes himself a guide; so that when strangers make their appearance, they are immediately surrounded by a crowd of vagabonds, determined to serve them whether they will or not. To threaten the supernumeraries with non-payment is useless; they understand the character of travellers, and so implicitly rely on their generosity, and reluctance to turn away, without reward, a poor devil, who has at least shown a disposition to be useful to them, that they always persevere, and seldom lose their labour. On quitting Sakkarah, we were accompanied only by a single guide; but in crossing the plain, two other men, abandoning their labour in the field, joined our party; and, upon entering the desert, another man, and two fine young women, whose regular business appeared to consist in searching for antiquities among the sand-hills and excavations, coolly enlisted themselves in the same service.

Attended by all these followers, not one of whom, perhaps, ever before acted as a guide, we proceeded towards the largest of the Pyramids, the entrance of which they strenuously insisted had not hitherto been discovered. Arriving at the spot, however, we discovered the adit at the bottom of a deep pit, partly filled with sand and stones. Externally, this structure resembles the Haram-el-Kedab, consisting of a series of square inclined towers, built upon each other, and terminating in a point. To descend into the interior many lights are necessary; but, coming from the Fayoom, where such articles are not procurable, we, of course, had neither tapers nor candles; but our guides had brought with them a number of dry palm-branches, with which, and our small travelling lamp, we prepared to descend: as the heat is always considerable in subterraneous chambers, we partly undressed. The Bedouin took charge of the baggage. Though in other respects sufficiently venturous, the Arab girls refused to enter the Pyramids, the mouth of which they seemed to regard with horror; but sitting down at a short distance, said they would there await our return.

We now descended into the pit with the guides; who, after clearing a portion of the sand away with the hands, threw themselves on their faces, and proceeding feet foremost, forced their way with much difficulty beneath the superincumbent rock. We did the same, and found ourselves in a low horizontal passage, leading directly towards the centre of the pyramid. Here the lamp and palm-branches were kindled, and we commenced the exploring of the subterranean galleries, a part of the Arabs preceding, others following us. For a short distance the passage continued so low, that it was necessary to stoop; but becoming higher by degrees, we were enabled to proceed with greater facility, until at length it branched off, on either hand, into numerous smaller corridors, leading in different directions, like those intricate excavations which extend beneath the foundations of Persepolis.* Evidently unacquainted with the topography of the place, the guides here seemed in doubt respecting the track they ought to follow; but after a moment's pause, selected a passage conducting, by an abrupt descent, to

* For an account of the ruins of this ancient and magnificent city, see Travels in Suristan and Arabistan, by the Baron de Bode, vol. i. pp. 156, sqq.

a lower level. All these galleries and corridors are excavated in the solid rock, which appears to constitute the whole interior of the pyramid, and probably lead to as many different suites of apartments; though to ascertain this it would be necessary, in some cases, to clear away numerous blocks of stone, which have detached themselves from the roof, and closed the passages. Arriving at length at a small fissure in the rock, the guide, who moved in front of me with the flaming palm-branches in his hand, descended through this opening, disappeared with his light, and it was some time before he returned, having, I imagine, hurried forward, in the hope of discovering whither it led. As soon as the light appeared, we also went down, and proceeding through narrow galleries and corridors, winding, mounting, descending, and crossing each other—at length arrived at a hall of immense height, excavated in the solid rock. A pistol was here fired, but the report, though loud, was succeeded by none of those extraordinary echoes distinguishable in the Pyramid of Cheops. From this chamber another series of passages, the entrance to which is now closed with stones and rubbish, seems formerly to have descended to inferior suites of apartments hitherto unexplored. The light yielded by the lamp and palm-branches was insufficient to discover the roof, or the exact form of several openings, resembling balconies or galleries, where, perhaps, during the celebration of the mysteries, the initiated may have sat observing the movements of the hierophants. Numerous lateral galleries, diverging from this point, appear to extend on all sides beneath the foundations of the Pyramid; but in attempting to explore them, our progress was generally obstructed by heaps of stone or sand. At length, however, after pursuing for some time the windings of a low corridor, we arrived suddenly at the mouth of a chasm of unknown depth, whose dimensions were concealed by the shadows of the projecting rocks. Deceived at first by the dimness of the light, I was about to step forward, when a loud and sudden exclamation from my terrified companion, who perceived the danger I was in, arrested my progress, and saved me from being precipitated into the abyss. On further examination it appeared that we were standing in one of the balconies overlooking the great hall. Retracing our footsteps from this perilous gallery, and finding nothing further in the Pyramid to detain us, we returned towards the entrance, and emerging into the desert found all our baggage and garments wetted by the rain.

Mounting our camels we now proceeded towards the celebrated mummy pits over an undulating sandy plain, diversified at intervals with small rocky eminences perforated with sepulchral chambers of various dimensions, wantonly dilapidated and rifled of their dead. Numerous beautiful sarcophagi, in perfect preservation and richly adorned with sculpture and hieroglyphics, lay scattered over the waste, all opened and plundered. Among them also were broken funeral urns, fragments of coffins and cere-cloths, and portions of disinterred human bodies. A small chapel standing in the midst of this interminable cemetery contains the entrance to the depository of the sacred birds, excavated at a considerable depth in the rock, the descent to which is by a square well, slippery and dangerous. For the use of travellers, small notches have been cut in its

perpendicular sides, but so shallow as barely to receive the point of the toe. The Arabs, barefoot, and accustomed to the operation, descended with the utmost facility; but when it became our turn to follow, the case was somewhat different, though by perseverance we ultimately succeeded. Arriving at the bottom, we moved after the guides through long passages cut in the rock, crushing at every step the frail jars which stood in heaps upon the ground; the lamp yielding but a dim light, it was impossible to discover the form and dimensions of the gallery, or the nature of the floor where the dust, bones, and envelopes of the ibises, lay mingled with innumerable fragments of pottery, rendering access to the interior irksome and laborious; and the guides, desirous of displaying their intimate knowledge of the locality, or of enhancing the merit of their services, by creating an extraordinary idea of the intricacy and vastness of the hypogea, seem to have selected the most circuitous route; but, at length, after traversing numerous dark passages, from whence the mummies had been removed, we reached the deep recess filled with jars, piled tier beyond tier, precisely as the old Egyptians had left them.

Notwithstanding the care lavished on the remains of the sacred birds, time in most instances has done its work, and reduced them, bones and all, to dust; so that travellers, intent on obtaining a perfect specimen, ignorantly or heedlessly break a hundred jars before they succeed; by which means these curious relics of ancient superstition and art, must, in a few years, be wholly destroyed. This Vandalism is perfectly gratuitous, for, by shaking the vessel, it is easy to discover the state of its contents. The jars, about fifteen inches in length, and seven or eight in diameter, are light, porous, and unglazed, ingeniously closed with two small round plates, partly let down into the vessels, meeting and lapping over each other in the middle, and firmly bound together by a coarse white cement. Though apparently solid and well preserved, the mummies frequently fall to ashes when exposed to the air, and therefore, for osteological and anatomical purposes, those embalmed at Thebes,—where, instead of being deposited in earthen vessels, they were wrapped in numerous linen bandages, are greatly to be preferred.

Having paid and discharged our guides, including the young women, and leaving the whole party engaged in a furious quarrel respecting the division of the spoil, we proceeded along the skirts of the desert towards the Pyramids of Gizeh; which, when approached from the south, present a still more magnificent and sublime aspect than from the opposite quarter. In this portion of the valley, the encroachment of the Libyan waste is too manifest and palpable to be disputed. Plants, the peculiar production of the fertile fields, are beheld surrounded by a thin layer of sand, marking the extreme boundary of the desert, which, incessantly, though imperceptibly, advances towards the river, obliterating all traces of cultivation. To a wise government, however, this phenomenon would be no subject of disquietude; since it is possible, not only to oppose, by the excavation of canals, an insuperable barrier to the growth of the wilderness, but even to reclaim and fertilise a large portion of its inhospitable downs, where moisture alone is wanting to vivify the germs of vegetation. In the deep hollow

immediately south of the Sphinx, six lofty trees, mimosas and sycamores, are nourished and clothed with luxuriant verdure by a scanty spring, concealed beneath the sand; while the surface of the arid expanse, bordering on the corn fields and meadows of Gizeh, is thinly covered with a dry long grass, which irrigation would quickly convert into rich pasture.

The whole vicinity of the Pyramids is occupied by tombs, some excavated in the rock, others constructed with vast blocks of stone,—masses of solid masonry, or, perhaps, containing chambers whose entrances are unknown. One of the former, now inhabited by a Mohammedan saint, is divided by a screen of Egyptian workmanship into two commodious apartments, adorned with sculpture and hieroglyphics, and containing numerous small niches for coffins. A row of figures, in alto-relievo, formerly extended the whole length of the tomb; but these, fanaticism or antiquarian avarice has long since removed. The saint was absent, begging, perhaps, in the villages; but his hospitable door stood open, so that whosoever chose might enter and rest himself. From this tomb we proceeded to the Pyramid of Mycerinus, the smallest, but once the most beautiful of these extraordinary temples, having been coated with red granite from Siene. Very few of the blocks now retain their original position; the greater number, displaced by Turkish or antiquarian barbarians, encumbering the soil about its base. South-west are two similar structures of smaller dimensions, and much dilapidated. Proceeding northward, along the great inclosure wall of the second Pyramid, we entered a spacious tomb, where, as at Eilithyas and Gournou, are delineated, in a rude style, the occupations and amusements of the Egyptians; butchers cutting up oxen, a favourite subject, dancing, fighting, &c. On one of the walls is a representation of a river fight, in which the boats containing the combatants seem very little superior to the coracles of the ancient Britons described by Cæsar. In the delineation of cattle, the artists of Thebes and Memphis appear to have made considerable proficiency; several bulls on the interior of this tomb are ably portrayed; and from the fulness and beauty of their form, it may be inferred that much care was bestowed in improving the breed of this animal, which was sometimes worshipped and sometimes eaten.

Having omitted during our first visit to enter the Pyramid of Cephrenes, opened by Belzoni, we now, accompanied by several Bedouins who had joined us from the neighbouring villages, descended into the interior; the operation involving neither difficulty nor danger. All the passages are beautifully cased with oriental porphyry. In the floor of the larger chamber—the only one now accessible—is a sunken sarcophagus, in which, it has been said, the bones of an ox (more probably of a cow) were found; a circumstance at variance with the vulgar hypothesis, that the Pyramids were royal tombs. Numerous names are scrawled upon the walls, but none possessing any interest, excepting that of Belzoni; those old Mohammedan signatures, visible on the first opening of the Pyramid, being no longer legible.* A passage, now blocked up with large stones, leads

* See Walpole's "Travels in the East."

towards the base of the edifice, where there probably exist many chambers excavated in the rock.

I now felt an inclination to mount this Pyramid; but had I been acquainted with the difficulties to be encountered, I much doubt whether my enthusiasm would have induced me to venture up. There are some Arabs in the neighbourhood who are celebrated for the performance. We sent for two of them; one an old man, the other about forty, and they engaged to assist us. The steps on the northern face are much worn by the pebbly sand, and the havoc of those who have searched for an entrance; we therefore ascend on the south side, and arrive, without much difficulty, at that point which travellers generally attain. The steps henceforth are cut away as with a plane; not even a ledge is left; and to form an idea of the whole, you must fancy the pyramid of Caius Sestus smoother than a slated roof, and placed at such a height from the earth, that the slightest *faux pas* would occasion a fall double what it would be from the top of the Monument. Here was an obstacle I knew not how the Arabs themselves could surmount, much less how I could possibly master; for above our heads jutted over, like an eave or coping, the lower stones of the coating which still remain, and retain a smooth polished surface. As considerable precaution was necessary, the men now made me take off my hat, coat, and shoes; the younger then placed his raised and extended hands against the projecting edge of the lower stone, which reached to above his chin; and the elder, taking me in his arms, as I would a child, set my feet on the other's shoulders, and my body flat on the smooth surface of the stone; in this position we formed an angle with each other, and here I remained for upwards of two minutes, till the older man went round, and by some other means contrived to get over the projection, when, creeping along the line of junction of the coping, he took my hands, drew me up to where he was, and then letting down his girdle, assisted to mount up the younger, but less active and less daring climber of the two. We then proceeded much as follows:—One of them got on the shoulders of the other, and so gained the joining of the stone above, which was often five feet asunder; the upper man then helped me in a similar action, while the lower pushed me up by the feet. Having gained this row, we had often to creep for some way along the joining to where another opportunity of ascending was afforded. In this way we proceeded to the summit, and some idea may be formed of my feelings, when it is recollected, that all these stones of such a span, are highly polished, are set at an angle less than 45°, and that the places we had to grasp with our hands and feet were often not ten inches wide, and their height above the ground upwards of 400 feet; a single slip of the foot, or a slight gust of wind, and, from our position, we must all three have been dashed to atoms, long before reaching the ground. On gaining the top, my guide gave vent to sundry demonstrations of satisfaction, clapping me on the back, patting my head, kissing my hands, and uttering a low growl, which presently rose into the more audible, and, to my ear, less musical cry of "backsheesh!" From all this I began to suspect that something wonderful had been achieved; and some idea of my perilous

situation broke upon me, as I saw several of my friends beneath waving their hats, and looking up with astonishment, as we sat perched upon the top, which is not more than six feet square. The apex stone is off, and the platform now consists of five slabs, and one in the centre, which is raised upon its end and leans to the eastward. I do not think that human hands could have lifted it thus from its bed, on account of its size, and the confined space they would have to work on. I am inclined to think the top was struck with lightning, and the position thus altered by it. The three of us had just room to sit upon the place. I saw two or three names scratched upon the central slab, to which of course I added my own, and collected some bones of the jerbil, which lay scattered about. At first I imagined these might have been carried up by hawks, but I soon heard the animals squeaking under where I sat. I had passed a vulture's nest on my way up. The heat was now most intense, and the stones so hot, that it became unpleasant to sit on them very long, and it would have been rather too daring an experiment to attempt standing. The descent was, as might be expected, much more dangerous, though not so difficult as the ascent.*

This pyramid, if in Hyde Park, might possibly be worn into a Sunday's amusement; but in its present state, I believe that nothing short of heaven itself would ever tempt me to go so near to heaven again by the same means. I ask permission to give some proofs of the real or imaginary difficulty of the undertaking. The Arabs in the neighbourhood of Cairo are much bolder than elsewhere, and even make a practice of hooting and laughing at Franks. We on our return towards the river became the butts of some labourers in the fields; our guides, who were still in company, informed them that we had been to the top of the Pyramid of Cephrenes, and the tongue of ridicule became immediately silent.

> "And when they talk of it, they shake their heads,
> And whisper one another in the ear."

CHAPTER XVI.

Superstitions of the Modern Egyptians.

After recounting the above long journey, it may be proper to direct our attention a little to certain notions and manners characteristic of the people of the country. We were, it will be remembered, in the great capital of the "Arabian Nights," the centre of the circle of Islam, where whatever is most remarkable in the habits or opinions of the eastern world may be said to flourish in greatest perfection. It would seem at first sight that the Arab inhabitants of Egypt, being brought frequently into contact with Europeans, ought by this time to have adopted something of our way of thinking, and to have imbibed some small portion at least of our learning. But this is not really the case. The two races regard each other

* Wilde. "Narrative."

rather with suspicion than with sympathy; and it will be many ages before the Arabs at least project themselves, if they ever do, into the sphere of our ideas and opinions. There appears to be some hidden influence in the climate and atmosphere of every country, which affects more or less powerfully the minds of its inhabitants. The operation of this principle, whatever it may be, is more easily discernible in the East than elsewhere; and, having existed from the earliest ages of the world up to this time, it seems fair to infer that it will always continue in activity. Nor does this appear to me matter of any very poignant regret, so long as what we denominate superstition does not lead to crime. Some inconvenience may possibly arise at times from the belief in Efrits and Jinn; but, upon the whole, it may well be doubted whether it does not serve to render the life of the Arab more agreeable. His imagination requires to be excited by something, and there is no means more generally at hand than those fantastic hobgoblins with which he peoples the elements. It is unphilosophical, therefore, to lament his illusions. He derives satisfaction from the relations which he supposes to exist between himself and those supernatural beings, and it would be inhuman, and therefore unwise, to deprive him of whatever pleasure the notion may impart. His sources of enjoyment, Heaven knows, are not too numerous! All the evils of bad government press with their full weight upon him. He has to struggle with poverty, with contempt, and every form of active oppression; and he would sink under the accumulated load of misery, were he not buoyed up by the thick stratum of elastic superstitions which extend under him, and break the force of his frequent falls. Every time I have conversed with an Arab, I have become more and more convinced of this truth. He turns away from the real evils which beset him, from his sordid hut, tattered garments, and empty board, to the palace, and magnificent raiment, and costly feasts, and beautiful harem, which he possesses in his ideal world, and in this way manages to taste some sort of happiness. No one can doubt this who has ever heard an Arab tell a story. He does not recount languidly a narrative which he knows to be fiction. By the plastic power of fancy he converts imaginary beings and events into realities, and moves among them as an actor, generally as the principal actor, moulding circumstances as he pleases, and feeding his appetite for pomp and splendour and physical enjoyment in a way unintelligible to colder natures. His eyes flash, his pulse quickens, his cheeks redden and pale by turns, he smiles, laughs outright, or indulges in tears and sorrow, as the incidents of his tale appear to require. Generally he is in a trance of delight; he beholds around him spiritual existences, some good, others malevolent, but all capricious; who may, some day or other, take it into their heads to make a Sheikh or an Emir of him, to shower on him boundless wealth, and render him master of the lawful number of fair wives. I used to observe this especially in my interpreter, Suliman. He had known what it was to be poor and in bad health, but whenever he walked abroad at dawn or twilight, it was obvious that he expected some benevolent Jinneh to appear and discover to him a hidden treasure. His eye and his smile were full of this anticipation, more especially when on the Nile at midnight, in the delicious calm of

those latitudes, and surrounded by the nodding ruins of temples or palaces, he used to keep me awake by recounting the wild adventures of some Arab hero or heroine.

Mr. Lane, therefore, is perfectly correct, when he describes the inhabitants of Egypt as a very superstitious people. It is true, too, that many of their superstitions constitute a part of their religion, being sanctioned by the Koran. The most prominent of these is the belief in Jinn, with whose character and attributes everybody has been rendered familiar by the "Thousand and one Nights." The Jinn are said to be of pre-Adamite origin, and a class of beings intermediate between angels and men, created of fire, and capable of assuming the forms and material fabric of men, brutes, and monsters, and of rendering themselves invisible at pleasure. Like mortals, they eat and drink, and become the parents of children, their helpmates being generally selected from among the descendants of Adam. They are subject, moreover, to death, though in most cases their lives are protracted through many centuries. Their principal abode is in the chain of mountains, called Kaf, which, by the Moslems, who believe the earth to be a plane surface, is supposed with the ocean to encompass the habitable world. Some of these spirits are believers in El-Islam; others are infidels. Of both these classes the Arabs stand in great awe; and for the former they entertain a high degree of respect. It is a common custom of this people, in pouring water on the ground, to exclaim or mutter, destoo'r, that is, to ask the permission or crave the pardon of any Jinneh that may chance to be there; for the Jinn are supposed to pervade both the solid matter of the earth and the firmament. They are also believed to inhabit rivers, ruined houses, wells, baths, and ovens; hence persons, when they let down a bucket into a well, or light a fire, and on other occasions, say "Permission!" or "Permission ye blessed!" which words they sometimes preface with a prayer for God's protection against all evil spirits. These customs present a commentary on the story in the "Thousand and one Nights," in which a merchant is described as having killed a Jinneh, by throwing aside the stone of a date which he had just eaten (almond shells in the old translation). In the same story, and in others of that collection, a Jinneh is represented as approaching in a whirlwind of sand or dust; and it is the general belief of the Arabs of Egypt that the Zobaáh, or whirlwind, which carries the sand or dust in the form of a pillar of prodigious height, so often seen sweeping across the fields and deserts of this country, is caused by the flight of one of these beings; or in other words, that the Jinneh rides in the whirlwind. A charm is usually uttered by the Egyptians to avert the Zobaáh when it seems to be approaching; some of them exclaim, "Iron, thou unlucky!" as Jinn are supposed to have a great dread of that metal; others endeavour to drive away the monster by exclaiming "God is most great."* What we call a falling star, is commonly believed to be a dart thrown by God at an evil Jinneh; and the Egyptians, when they see it, exclaim, "May Allah transfix the enemy of

* See, in the "History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece," an account of similar superstitions among the Hellenes.

the faith!" The evil Jinn are commonly termed Efrits. The existence of Efrits must be believed by the Moslems, on account of the occurrence, in the Koran, of these words:—"An Efrit from among the Jinn answered." They are generally believed to differ from the other Jinn in being very powerful, and always malicious; but to be, in other respects, of a similar nature. Connected with the history of the Jinn are many fables, not acknowledged by the Koran, and therefore not credited by the sober Moslems, but only by the less instructed. The latter believe that the earth was inhabited before the time of Adam by a race of beings differing from ourselves in form, and much more powerful; and that forty (or, according to some, seventy-two) pre-Adamite kings, each of whom bore the name of Sooleyman or Solomon successively governed this people. The last of the Sooleymans was named Ga'n Ibn Ga'n, and from him, it is said, the Jinn, who are also called Ga'n, derive their name. Hence some believe the Jinn to be the same with the pre-Adamite race here mentioned; but others assert that they were a distinct class of beings, and brought into subjection by the other race.

Jinn are believed often to assume, or perpetually to wear, the shapes of cats, dogs, and other brute animals. The Sheikh Khaleel El-Medabighee, one of the most celebrated of the ulema of Egypt, and author of several works on various sciences, who died at a very advanced age, during the period of my former visit to this country, used to relate the following anecdote:—He had, he said, a favourite black cat, which always slept at the foot of his bed. Once at midnight he heard a knocking at the door of his house; and his cat went and opened the hanging shutter of his window, and called, "Who's there?" A voice replied, "I am such-a-one (mentioning a strange name), the Jinneh; open the door." "The lock," said the Sheikh's cat, "has had the name of God pronounced upon it." "Then throw me down," said the other, "two cakes of bread." "The bread-basket," answered the cat at the window, "has had the name pronounced upon it." "Well," said the stranger, "at least give me a drink of water." But he was answered that the water-jar had been secured in the same manner; and asked what he was to do, seeing that he was likely to die of hunger and thirst. The Sheikh's cat told him to go to the next house, and went there also himself, and opened the door, and soon after returned. Next morning the Sheikh deviated from a habit which he had constantly observed; he gave to the cat half the fateereh upon which he breakfasted, instead of a little morsel, which he was wont to give; and afterwards said, "O my cat, thou knowest that I am a poor man; bring me then a little gold;" upon which words the cat immediately disappeared, and he saw it no more.

It is commonly affirmed that malicious or disturbed Jinn very often station themselves on the roofs, or at the windows of houses in Cairo, and other towns of Egypt, and throw bricks and stones down into the streets and courts. I was once told of a case of this kind, which had alarmed the people in the principal street of the metropolis for a whole week; many bricks having been thrown down from some of the houses every day during this period, though nobody was killed or wounded. I went to the scene

of these pranks of this Jinneh to witness them, and to make inquiries on the subject; but on my arrival there, I was told that the *regm* or throwing had ceased. I found no one who denied the falling down of the bricks, or doubted that it was the work of the Jinn; and the general remark on mentioning the subject was, "God avert from us this evil doing." One of my friends observed to me on this occasion, that he had met with some Englishmen who disbelieved in the existence of Jinn; but he concluded that they had never witnessed a public performance, though common in their country, of which he had since heard, called Koomedyeh (Comedy), by which term he meant to include all theatrical performances. Addressing one of his own countrymen, and appealing to me for the confirmation of his words, he then said—"An Algerine a short time ago gave me an account of a spectacle of this kind which he had seen in London." Here his countryman interrupted him by asking, "Is not England in London? or is London a town in England?" My friend with diffidence, and looking to me, answered, that London was the metropolis of England, and then resumed the subject of the theatre. "The house," said he, "in which the spectacle was exhibited cannot be described; it was of a round form, with many benches on the floor, and closets all round, in rows one above another, in which people of the higher class sat; and there was a large square aperture closed with a curtain. When the house was full of people, who paid considerable sums of money to be admitted, it suddenly became very dark; it was at night, and the house had been lighted up with a great many lamps; but these were almost entirely extinguished, all at the same time, without being touched by anybody. Then the great curtain was drawn up; they heard the roaring of the sea and wind; and indistinctly perceived through the gloom, the waves rising and foaming and lashing the shore. Presently a tremendous peal of thunder was heard; after a flash of lightning had clearly shown to the spectator the agitated sea; and then there fell a heavy shower of real rain. Soon after the day broke; the sea became more plainly visible; and two ships were seen in the distance; they approached, and fought each other, firing their cannons; and a variety of other extraordinary scenes were afterwards exhibited. Now, it is evident," added my friend, "that such wonders must have been the work of Jinn, or, at least, performed by their assistance."

During the month of Ramad'han, the Jinn, it is said, are confined in prison; and hence, on the eve of the festival which follows that month, some of the women of Egypt, with the view of preventing these objects of dread from entering their houses, sprinkle salt upon the floors of the apartments, saying as they do it, "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful."

A curious relic of ancient Egyptian superstition may here be mentioned. It is believed that each quarter in Cairo has its peculiar guardian genius, or Agathodæmon, which has the form of a serpent. The ancient tombs of Egypt, and the dark recesses of the temples, are commonly believed by the people of this country to be inhabited by Efrits.

The term Efrit is commonly applied rather to an evil Jinneh than any

other being; but the ghosts of dead persons are also called by this name; and many absurd stories are related of them; and great are the fears which they inspire. There are many persons, however, who hold them in no degree of dread. I had once a humorous cook, who was somewhat addicted to the intoxicating hasheesh; soon after he had entered my service I heard him one evening muttering and exclaiming on the stairs, as if in surprise at some event; and then politely saying, "But why are you sitting here in the draught? Do me the favour to come up into the kitchen, and amuse me with your conversation a little." This civil address not being answered, was repeated and varied several times; till I called out to the man, and asked him to whom he was speaking. "The Efrit of a Turkish soldier," he replied, "is sitting on the stairs, smoking his pipe, and refuses to move; he came up from the well below; pray step and see him." On my going to the stairs, and telling the servant I could see nothing, he only remarked that it was because I had a clear conscience. He was told afterwards that the house had been haunted; but he asserted that he had not been previously informed of the supposed cause: which was, the fact of a Turkish soldier having been murdered there.

Stories of haunted houses are quite as common in Cairo and other parts of the East as they are in the remoter districts of our own island.* Frequently many excellent dwellings are deserted and suffered to fall to decay, because Efrits are supposed to have taken up their abode in them. Sometimes these reports may be traceable to the malice of neighbours, though generally noises, occasioned by unknown causes, give rise to them. In order to illustrate the popular belief of the Arabs on this subject, I shall here introduce the story of a haunted house in Cairo, premising that the narrator is a lady now residing with her family in that city.

"After having searched for a habitation during a month in vain, we were delighted with the offer of an exceedingly good one, which appeared in every respect eligible, and in which we are now residing. But our domestic comfort in this new abode has been disturbed by a singular trouble, which has obliged us to arrange as soon as possible for a removal. The house is an admirable one, being nearly new, though on the old construction.

"We were much surprised, after passing a few days here, to find that our servants were unable to procure any rest during the night; being disturbed by a constant knocking, and by the appearance of what they believe to be an Efrit. The manner of the servants' complaint was very characteristic. Having been much annoyed one morning by a noisy quarrel under our windows, my brother called one of our servants to ascertain how it had arisen, when he replied, 'It is a matter of no importance, O Efendi; but the subject which perplexes us is, that there is a devil in the bath.' My brother being aware of their superstitious prejudices, replied: 'Well, is there a bath in the world that you do not believe to be a resort of evil spirits, according to the well known tradition on that subject?' 'True, O

* See on this subject three extremely curious and interesting articles on "Dreams, Night-Noises, &c.," by Mr. Ollier, in "Ainsworth's Magazine."

my master,' rejoined the man, 'the case is so; this devil has long been the resident of the house, and he will never permit any other tenant to retain its quiet possession for many years; no one has remained more than a month within these walls, excepting the last person who lived here, and he, though he had soldiers and slaves, could not stay more than about nine months; for the devil disturbed his family all night.' I must here tell you that during our short stay in the house, the maids have left us, one after another, without giving us any idea of their intentions, and have never returned; and the cause of their sudden disappearance was now explained by the men their fellow-servants. Certainly our own rest was grievously disturbed; but we had attributed all the annoyance to a neighbour's extraordinary demonstrations of joy on the subject of his own marriage, and whose festivities were, perhaps, the more extravagant, because he is an old man, and his bride a young girl. The noise was deafening during the whole of eight nights, and, when we were becoming accustomed to the constant din, we were roused by three tremendous reports of fire-arms, which rang through the apartments of our own and the neighbouring houses, and shook our dwellings to the very foundation. It is, therefore, not remarkable that we did not hear the sounds which disturbed our poor servants, in addition to the sufficient uproar without.

"It appeared, on inquiry, that the man to whom this house formerly belonged, and who is now dead, had, during his residence in it, murdered a poor tradesman who entered the court with his merchandise, and two slaves: one of these (a black girl) was destroyed in the bath, and you will easily understand how far such a story as this, and a true one too, sheds its influence on the minds of a people who are superstitious to a proverb. We can only regret that my brother engaged the house in ignorance of these circumstances; had he known them, he would also have been aware that the prejudice among the lower orders would be insurmountable, and that no female servant would remain with us. The sudden disappearance of our maids was thus gravely explained by our door-keeper. 'Why did Amineh and Zeyneb leave you?' 'Verily, O my master, because they feared for their security. When Amineh saw the Efrit, she said at once: "I must quit this house; for if he touch me I shall be deranged, and unfit for service;" and truly,' he added, 'this would have been the case. For ourselves, as men, we fear not; but we fear for the harem. Surely you will consider their situation, and quit this house.' This, he thought, was putting the matter in the strongest light. 'Try a few nights longer,' said my brother 'and call me as soon as the spirit appears; we might have caught him last night, when you say he was so near you, and after giving him a sound beating, you would not have found your rest disturbed.' At this remark it was evident that the respect of both servants for their master had received a temporary shock. 'Oh Efendi,' exclaimed one of them, 'this is an Efrit, and not a son of Adam, as you seem to suppose. He assumed last night all imaginary shapes, and when I raised my hand to seize him, he became a piece of cord or any other trifle.' Now these men are valuable servants, and we should be sorry to lose them, especially in our present predicament; therefore my brother merely

answered, that if the annoyance did not cease, he would make inquiries respecting another house.

"I have omitted to observe, that the inhuman wretch to whom this house belonged bequeathed it to a mosque, perhaps as an expiation for his crimes, but left it, for the term of her life, to the person who is our present landlady; and now a circumstance was explained to our minds which we had not before fully understood. On the day before we desired to remove here, we sent one of our servants to hire some women, and to superintend the clearing of the house; and on his arrival there, the landlady, whose name is Lálah-Zár, or bed of tulips, refused him admission, saying, 'Return to the Efendi, and say to him that I am baking cakes in the oven of his kitchen, that I may give them away to-morrow at the tomb of the late owner of the house, to the poor and needy. This is a meritorious act for your master's sake, as well as for my own, and your master will understand it.'

"Poor woman! it is now evident to us that she hoped by this act of propitiation to prevent further annoyance to her tenants, and consequent loss to herself.

"The morning after the conversation I have related took place, the servant's report was considerably improved. They had passed, they said, a comfortable night, and we hoped we might arrange to remain here; but the following day a most singular statement awaited us. The doorkeeper, in a tone of considerable alarm, said that he had been unable to sleep at all; that the Efrit had walked round the gallery all night *in clogs!* and had repeatedly knocked at his door with a brick, or some other hard substance. Then followed the question, why one of the men had not called my brother, evidently because neither of them dared pass the gallery round which the supposed Efrit was taking his midnight walks, striking each door violently as he passed it. For many nights the noise continued, and many evenings they began before we retired to rest; and as we could never find the offender, I sadly feared for my children; not for their personal safety, but lest they should incline to superstition: and nothing impoverishes the mind so much as such a tendency.

"Another singular circumstance attending this most provoking annoyance was our finding, on several successive mornings, five or six pieces of charcoal laid at the door leading to the chambers in which we sleep, conveying in this country a wish, or rather an imprecation, which is far from agreeable; viz., 'May your face be blackened!' However, under all these circumstances, I rejoiced to find my children increasingly amused by these pranks, and established in the belief that one or more wicked persons liked the house so well, that they resolved to gain possession, and to eject, by dint of sundry noises and other annoyances, any persons who desired its occupation. It is, however, a more serious matter to poor Lálah-Yár than to us; for it is certain that the legacy of the late possessor will never produce a great benefit to her. You will be surprised when I tell you, that the rent of such a house as this does not exceed twelve pounds per annum. It is a very superior dwelling, and infinitely beyond the usual run; therefore always styled by the people of the country the house of an Emir."

To continue the story of the ghost or Efrit. "Ramad'han arrived, and we were for a time freed from his visitation; but when it ended, the comparative quiet of our nights ended also. To describe all the various noises by which we have been disturbed is impossible. Very frequently the door of the room in which we were sitting late in the evening, within two or three hours of midnight, was violently knocked at many short intervals: at other times it seemed as if something very heavy fell upon the pavement close under one of the windows of the same room, or of one adjoining; and as these rooms were on the top of the house, we imagined at first that some stones or other things had been thrown by a neighbour, but we could find nothing outside after the noise I have mentioned. The usual sounds continued during the greater part of the night, and were generally like a heavy trampling, like the walking of a person in large clogs, varied by knocking at the doors of many of the apartments, and at the large water-jars, which are placed in recesses in the galleries. Our maids have come and gone like shadows ever since our residence here, excepting during Ramad'han; and *sauve qui peut* seems to have been their maxim, for they believe that one touch of an Efrit would render them demoniacs.

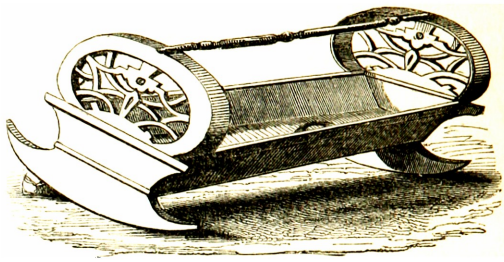
"A little while ago, a girl who had only passed two days in the house, rushed to our usual sitting room, whence she had just removed our supper, exclaiming that a tall figure in white was standing with outspread arms at the entrance of the upper gallery, to prevent her passing. We all immediately returned with her, and as you will anticipate, found nothing. This white figure our servant called a Saint, and they assert that the house is haunted by a Saint and an Efrit. One man assures us that this same Saint, who is, to use his expression, of dazzling whiteness, applied himself one night to the bucket of the well in the court, and, having drawn up water, performed his ablutions and said his prayers. Frightening servant-maids is, I ween, rather inconsistent with such conduct. Certainly the servants do not complain without reason, and it is particularly grievous, because there is not, throughout the whole healthful part of the city, one comfortable house vacant.

"During Ramad'han, the Moslems believe that Efrits are imprisoned, and thus our attendants accounted for our freedom from annoyance during that month. We, on the other hand, believed that we had bolted and barred out the offender, by having discovered his place of ingress, and were much disappointed at finding our precautions useless.

"A few days since, our door-keeper, a new servant, complained that he not only could not sleep, but that he never had slept, since his arrival, more than a few minutes at a time, and that he never could sleep consistently with his duty, unless the Efrit could be destroyed. He added, that he came every night into the upper gallery, leading to our sleeping-room, and there he found the figure I have mentioned, walking round and round, and concluded with an anxious request that his master would consent to his firing at the phantom, saying that devils have always been destroyed by the discharge of fire-arms. We consented to the proposal, provided he used neither ball nor small shot. Two days and nights passed, and we found on the third that the door-keeper was waiting to ascertain whether

the spectre were a saint or a devil, and had therefore resolved to question him on the ensuing night before he fired.

"The night came, and it was one of unusual darkness. We had really forgotten our recent intentions, although we were talking over the subject of the disturbances until near midnight, and speculating upon the cause in the room where my children were happily sleeping, when we were startled by a tremendous discharge of fire-arms, which was succeeded by the deep hoarse voice of the door-keeper exclaiming 'There he lies, the accursed!' and a sound as of a creature struggling and gasping for breath. In the next moment the man called loudly to his fellow-servants, crying, 'Come up, the accursed is struck down before me!' and this was followed by such mysterious sounds, that we believed either a man had been shot, and was in his last agony, or that our man had accidentally shot himself.



Egyptian Cradle

"My brother went round the gallery, while I and my sister-in-law stood like children trembling hand in hand, and my boys mercifully slept (as young ones do sleep) sweetly and soundly through all the confusion and distress. It appeared that the man used not only ball cartridges, but put two charges of powder, with balls into his pistol. I will describe the event, however, in his own words:—"The Efrit passed me in the gallery and repassed me, when I thus addressed it, 'Shall we quit this house or will you do so?' 'You shall quit it,' he answered; and, passing me again, he threw dirt into my right eye. This proved he was a devil," continued the man, "and I wrapped my cloak around me and watched the spectre as it receded. It stopped in that corner, and I observed its appearance attentively. It was tall and perfectly white. I stooped, and before I moved again discharged my pistol, which I had before concealed, and the accursed was struck down before me, and here are the remains." So saying, he picked up a small burnt mass, which my brother showed us afterwards, resembling more the sole of a shoe than anything else, but perforated by fire in several places, and literally burnt to a cinder. This the man asserted was always the relic when a devil was destroyed, and it lay on the ground under a part of the wall where the bullets had entered. The noise which succeeded the report, and which filled me with horror, is and must ever remain a mystery. On the following morning we closely examined the spot, and found nothing that could throw light on the subject. The burnt remains do not help us to a conclusion; one thing, however, I cannot but believe that some one who had personated the spirit suffered some injury, and that the darkness favoured his escape. It is truly very ridiculous in

these people to believe that the remains of a devil resemble the sole of an old shoe. It reminds me of the condensed spirits of whom we read in the 'Thousand and One Nights,' who were bottled up, hermetically sealed, and thrown into the sea by order of Suleyman, the son of Da-ood.

"I need scarcely say that the servant was reprimanded for disobeying his orders with regard to charging the pistol. With this exception he has proved ever obedient, most respectful, and excellent in every point. I really believe the man was so worn out by want of sleep, and exasperated by finding the same figure nightly pacing round the galleries and preventing his rest, that he became desperate." *

CHAPTER XVII.

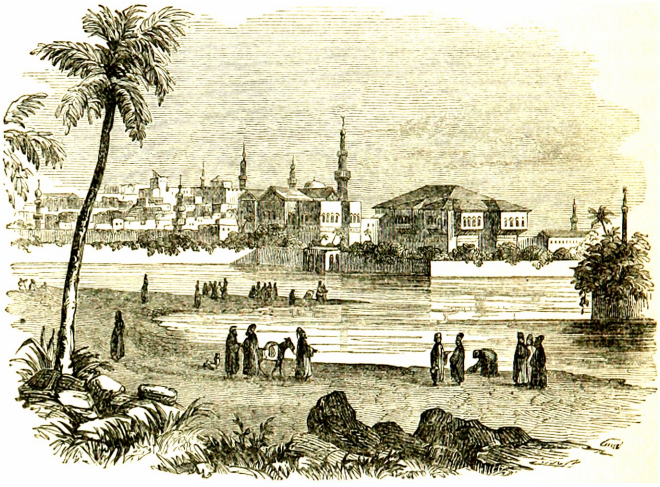
DEPARTURE OF THE PILGRIM CARAVAN.—MADHOUSE.—BAZAARS.

AMONG the spectacles witnessed by the traveller in the city and environs of Cairo, none perhaps is more deserving of notice than the departure of the pilgrim caravan, which yearly in the spring traverses the Arabian wilderness to Mekka. From the decay of religious zeal in all parts of the Mohammedan world, the pomp and magnificence formerly displayed on these occasions, have for ages been gradually diminishing. The Khalifs of Egypt, when they undertook the pilgrimage in person, frequently exhibited the extreme of barbaric grandeur, being attended by innumerable cavaliers in gorgeous costume, mounted on horses or dromedaries richly caparisoned in purple or gold; and even in later ages, the governors and pashas entrusted with the management of the sacred calvalcade, expended considerable sums in what was regarded as a work of piety. But the passion for costly and glittering pageants, characteristic of barbarous times and nations, has long been on the wane in the East, where a more simple taste, introduced by good sense or poverty, is imperceptibly succeeding it. Perhaps, as regards Egypt, the decay of pilgrimage may be connected with the policy of Mohammed Ali, the pervading spirit of whose government is wholly adverse to the influence of religious zeal.

Early in the morning, shortly after the salah il subh, the firing of cannon, and an unusual noise and commotion in the streets, announced the commencement of the important day. The whole population of the city appeared to be agitated by the anticipation of some extraordinary event. Groups of men and women, congregating in the squares and public places, or hurrying hither and thither with shouts and clamour, as during the first movements of an insurrection, imparted to the scene an aspect of unusual interest; and a few turbulent spirits, dexterously availing themselves of the effervescence excited among the multitude, might easily have converted the religious assembly into a political tumult. Residing in the Turkish quarter, we enjoyed the advantage of beholding everything that took place. On no occasion had the Caireens ever appeared so full of vivacity. All business

* Lane. "The Englishman in Egypt," &c.

was suspended, and the inhabitants, closing their warehouses and their shops, came forth, attired in their holiday costume, to behold or join in the procession. The crowd, dressed in garments of various colours, with



Berkit-el-Fil.

gay variegated turbans, were all moving towards the citadel whence the sacred covering for the Kaaba, accompanied by the Saint, the pilgrims and the military escorts, was to descend into the city, and be conveyed to the encampment in the desert. Mingling among the multitude, and traversing the city in various directions, we passed through the Birket-el-Fil, and proceeded ultimately to the street leading to the Gate of Victory, through which the cavalcade must necessarily pass; and taking our stand in front of a coffee-house, surrounded by Turks and Arabs, awaited the appearance of the procession. Directly opposite was a mosque, upon the projecting galleries of which were several ladies of distinction, leaning over the balconies, and looking earnestly in the direction of the citadel. As far as the eye could reach, the streets were occupied by a dense crowd, packed so close together, that the whole space appeared to be paved with turbans. In a short time a Turkish horseman, whose business it was to clear the way for the pageant, appeared, and was immediately succeeded by a long file of heavily-laden camels, bearing the baggage of the pilgrims. As the animals passed, the ladies, occupying the high Saracenic gallery of the mosque, inspired like the Maenades of old by the fervour of devotion, uttered one of those shrill indescribable shrieks of joy peculiar to the females of the East, which probably accompanied the bacchanalian orgies of Osiris. Next succeeded the military escort, horse and infantry, designed to protect the religious adventurers from the attacks of the Bedouins. The common soldiers, in the ordinary uniform of the Nizam, had a plain appearance; but the officers,

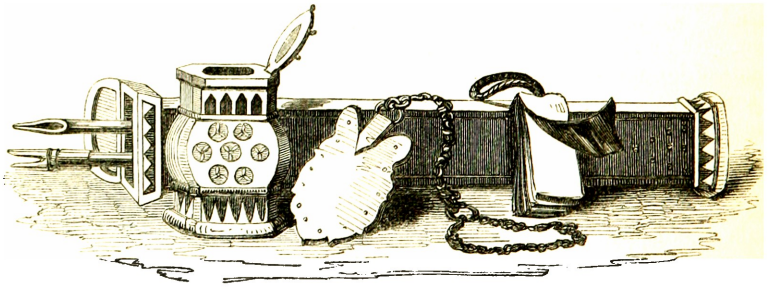
in their magnificent dresses of green, scarlet, and gold, with their sparkling decorations, shawl-sashes, and glittering arms, recalled to mind the old barbaric splendour of the East. On this occasion European instruments were judiciously dispensed with; the band, though scanty, being in the genuine Turkish style, consisting of kettle-drums mounted on camels, and fifes, yielding those loud ear-piercing notes, which alone the Orientals regard as music. Several of the drums, formed of copper and parchment, were of immense size, resembling the nakarras of Mewar, with which, in former ages, they used to proclaim from the ancient palace of Oodipoor, the opening of the festival of Bhavani. These were followed by the Sheikhs or Saints of Cairo; and the whole body of pilgrims, many from the most distant Mussulman provinces of Africa, mounted on lofty camels, with green and scarlet housings embroidered with gold, intermingled with numerous fanatical devotees on foot, bearing flags containing mottoes and devices.

To these succeeded a man in very peculiar costume, on a fine dromedary, carrying on his lap a cat, the favourite animal of the Prophet, which seemed well pleased with its situation, and, as it moved along, regarded the surrounding multitude with the utmost complacency. This circumstance, though trifling in itself, conveys a high idea of the veneration still, in spite of time, entertained by the Mohammedans for the founder of their religion. At length came the Mahmal, or sacred camel, bearing the covering for the Kaaba, suspended on a lofty frame-work, resembling a tent. This was the object of universal veneration; every individual in the crowd eagerly pressed towards the camel, in the hope of touching it as it passed, while thousands of persons, principally women, thronged the large projecting windows on either side, and letting down from above long shawls or girdles, or the linen of their turbans, upon the holy veil, again drew them up, and pressed them with an air of deep devotion on their hearts or foreheads. Meanwhile shouts of joy rent the air, as the Mahmal went shuffling along, amid crowds of anxious faces, above and below, and waving turbans and dishevelled hair. The commander of the Haj, a Turk of rank and distinction, was followed by a camel bearing a small canopy, or howdah, probably indicative of his office, as it appeared too small for use. Numerous jesters or buffoons, the original type of our professed "fools" of Europe, moved on among the saints, making strange grimaces, and uttering studied absurdities for the amusement of the populace. Of these motley personages, some were borne on men's shoulders, others rode upon camels; while the less distinguished, like the renowned Martinus Scribberus, made their own legs their compasses. Their fantastic dresses and quaint appearance defy description; but the principal fool wore a capote of sheep-skin, dressed with the wool on, and possessed a prodigious pair of mustachios, at least six or seven inches long, painted of divers colours, and sticking out on either side like leeks.

When the procession had formed, we followed among the throng, and going out through the Gate of Victory, pursued the track of the pilgrims along the skirts of the extensive cemeteries, where the populace were engaged with their noisy amusements, drums, monkeys, and dancing-girls, whose performances called forth frequent bursts of applause. The more

ordinary species of ghawazies had taken possession of the ruined tombs, and other old buildings, where they were at home to visitors of all descriptions. At the corner of an old mosque, or large tomb, sat a street-scribe with his elaborate writing apparatus, consisting of a massive inkstand, the long case in which he kept his reed-pens, &c. He was engaged apparently in composing a letter, and paid no attention to the crowds that swept past. Ascending the lofty mounds of rubbish beyond the cemetery, we watched the long line of pilgrims winding its way through tombs and gardens to its station in the desert, where the tents of the Turkish escort had been pitched for several weeks. Of the numerous individuals forming this remarkable procession, the greater number, in all probability, would never return; since in these expeditions, many perish on the road from fatigue, or are cut off by the Bedouins; others fall victims to the deleterious climate of

Street Scribe.



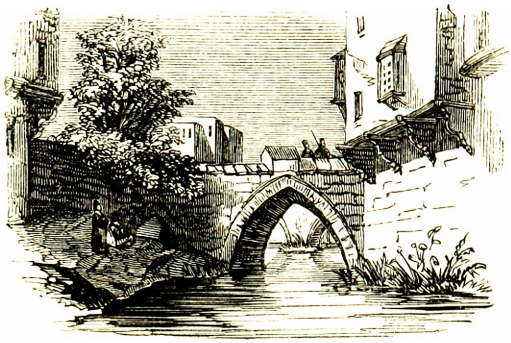
A Writing Case.

Mekka; while others, embarking in frail, ill-manned vessels, are drowned on their way home in the Red Sea. On all sides small parties of Arabs, dispersed over the sands, some with their wives and children, others with a knot of dancing-girls, were enjoying the delights of idleness, or listening to the marvellous relations of the story-teller. The view comprehending all the groups, and extending over the whole of Cairo, was strikingly interesting; but it became more so, when, descending from the hillocks, we mingled among the multitude, pouring like bees along the plain. Most persons appear to advantage on a holiday; for pleasures, at least such as may be enjoyed in the open air, have an irresistible tendency

to foster habits of benevolence and toleration,—men being exceedingly disposed, when melted by the warmth of enjoyment, to behold whatever comes before them in glowing and agreeable colours. And this appears particularly to be the case among the Arabs, whose lively excitable natures, receiving with facility the impulses of voluptuousness, have at the same time a proneness to conversation and sociability. At this time the enemies of Mohammed Ali, who, among the Turkish part of the population, greatly outnumber his friends, industriously propagated the report that a dangerous rebellion had broken out in the Delta, and the newly-governed province of Syria; and by these and other means, great political agitation, popular discontent, and the expectation and hope of change, were everywhere maintained. The Pasha's authority, which it was hoped would speedily terminate, was every day set at nought. Robbers and murderers, issuing from their hiding-places, imagining that the reign of law was annihilated, began openly to exercise their profession, diffusing terror and perturbation through the community. Everything, in short, seemed to indicate the approach of one of those periods of transition in which governments are overthrown, and society shaken to its foundation. Even the sanctity of the pilgrim character was insufficient to protect its possessors. Three hajjis, from Fez, or Morocco, proceeding along the eastern bank of the river towards Cairo, to join the Sacred Caravan, then about to depart for the Hejaz, were by a band of robbers attacked and plundered, and one of their number was killed. Similar atrocities were perpetrated in the very bazaars, close to the capital. At a village in the neighbourhood of Ghizeh, where a cattle-market is weekly held, a peasant having disposed of a number of oxen, was standing beside a camel, the last of his flock, when a Moggrebyn Bedouin accosted him, demanding the price of the beast. The peasant, according to custom, asked double its value, in order to afford the Bedouin an occasion for exercising his sagacity and tact at bargaining; and after much debating, the animal was sold for two hundred and fifty piastres. Not long after the fellah, who had remained in the bazaar, saw the Moggrebyn return mounted on horseback, with a spear in his hand, riding hastily towards him; the insolent marauder exclaimed, "Dog! and son of a dog! I will burn your father! You have sold me a bad camel, and I must have back my money!" To this uncourteous salutation the fellah replied, that whatever might be the qualities of the beast—though he maintained it to be an excellent one—the Bedouin had purchased it with his eyes open, and should therefore abide by his bargain. A quarrel now ensuing, the peasant, inflamed with anger, drew forth his purse, and shaking it at his enemy, bade him bring back the camel and he was ready to refund the money. This was exactly what the Bedouin had anticipated: stooping suddenly, he snatched the purse out of his hands, and plunging the spear into his heart, rode off into the desert, leaving the body weltering in blood in the midst of the market-place, surrounded by many hundred people, none of whom made the slightest attempt at arresting the murderer.

Entertaining the design of visiting Mount Sinai, and penetrating by the Gulf of Akaba to the Dead Sea, it was requisite to obtain from the Greek

bishop, residing at Cairo, a letter of recommendation, without which no traveller is admitted into the convent. Repairing therefore to the establishment, having on the way crossed the kalish by an old bridge of one arch, possessed by the Sinai monks in the capital, situated in one of its most obscure quarters, and being admitted into the outer court, we inquired for the bishop or principal of the order. A number of Bedouins, and inferior monks of still more sinister aspect, were lounging about the yard; and one of the latter, in reply to our inquiries, directed us to ascend a narrow flight of stairs, but without offering to lead the way. Having mounted to an upper court, a monk of superior grade presented himself, to whom we explained our business. Instead of inviting us into an antechamber, or displaying anything of that politeness affected by men of his caste in Europe, he abruptly entered, carefully closing the door after him, without condescending even to apologise for his unceremonious conduct. The bishop, who probably had not yet risen, was a considerable time in preparation; but at length the monk reappeared, and observing that his superior was now ready to receive us, led the way into a very neat apartment, at one end of which was a raised platform, covered with carpets and surrounded by a divan, while the other extremity exhibited the common stone floor. Here an antique book-case, ornamented with dusky carving, displayed the scanty conventual library; old folio editions of the principal fathers of the Greek church, in plain binding, with their titles written on the back on ordinary paper. A few quaint prints of the Virgin and Mount Sinai adorned the walls. In the midst of the apartment stood the bishop, a handsome, venerable old man, with long white beard, and comely, healthful countenance. He received us very politely, and, conducting us to a seat on the divan, entered at once into a rather animated conversation, one of his monks serving him as interpreter, and Osman performing the same office for us. Monks, in most countries, are ignorant on all subjects not immediately connected with the temporal interests of the church; but the knowledge possessed by these poor men was scanty even for monks. To our first inquiry respecting the safety of the road to Mount Sinai they returned a direct and satisfactory answer; but when we proceeded to demand, whether it would be practicable, with a small escort of Bedouins, to traverse the valleys of Ghor and Araba, they appeared not only to be unacquainted with the nature of the country, but with the very names and



Bridge on Canal, Cairo.

characters of the nomadic tribes in their own immediate vicinity. The number of monks in the convents of Sinai and Cairo are about forty-six, equally divided between the two establishments. From these topics, which they discussed with evident impatience, as promising not the slightest interest for them, they made an abrupt transition to their own state, and inquired when they were to be emancipated from the yoke of the Turks? It was at first difficult to discern the exact drift of the question; but in the sequel we found that they desired to know how long the English meant to defer the conquest of Egypt. Had we been Frenchmen, the same question, with a slight variation, would probably have been put to us, it being utterly indifferent to them by what nation they are delivered from the yoke of the Mussulman. This was followed by a modest demand for a considerable sum of money; not timidly and bashfully made, as if they doubted the propriety or delicacy of the transaction, but with the most confident assurance, scarcely admitting of any denial, like persons who only require what is due to them. Their appearance, however, presented no indication of poverty: the furniture of the apartment was respectable, and in the centre stood two magnificent candelabra.

From the convent we proceeded to visit the madhouse, forming one of the wings or out-buildings of a spacious mosque, through the principal entrance to which we were conducted into the court where the insane are confined. In all countries a lunatic asylum constitutes a fearful spectacle, shocking to the feelings and humiliating to the pride of humanity. But nowhere perhaps on earth can anything so terrible, so disgusting, be witnessed, as the madhouse of Cairo, where, as may certainly be inferred from the ferocious aspect of the keepers, and the appearance of the victims, lacerated and covered with wounds, scenes of suffering and cruelty cannot elsewhere be exhibited out of hell. In the centre of the court is a square pool, sometimes dignified with the name of a fountain; but which, in smell and appearance, rather resembles a common sewer. The atmosphere, impregnated by its infernal exhalations, is consequently more offensive and corrupt than that of a dissecting-room in July; and the walls and pavement are covered with a green ropy matter, and most dismal hue, which prepares the mind for the horrors to be witnessed in the cells. In the face of the dingy wall, surrounding the court, are a number of square iron-grated holes, which would appear to lead to so many old neglected dens of wild beasts, but that within each, closely pressed perhaps against the rusty gratings, a human being is beheld, generally stark naked. From the heavy iron collar encircling his neck is suspended a massive chain, which, issuing through the grating, and running like a festoon along the wall to the mouth of the neighbouring den, connects him with his next companion in madness; so that when one retires into the cell, the other at the opposite end of the chain is necessarily dragged forward in proportion. In the first cell, commencing on the right, was a young Arab, sunk in a lethargy from which nothing could rouse him. He turned his eyes after us as we passed, otherwise he might have been taken for a statue. The next was an Arnaout soldier, who, becoming mad in Candia, had been sent thither by Mohammed Ali, to spend the remainder of his life in chains. He sat cross-legged close

to the gratings, perfectly naked, with his arms crossed upon his breast, and his eyes closed as if in a dream. Being roused and called upon by name, he slowly opened his eyes, while one of the bystanders presented him with a flower, which he smelled and appeared to regard with interest, smiling when addressed, but uttering not a word; and when we quitted him, he again relapsed into his dreamy state. The individual occupying the neighbouring cell, lying in a corner, rolled up in a blanket and mat, lifted up his head when called upon, stared wildly at the spectators, and then covering himself, again refused to come forth. Seated by the next grating was a youth, about eighteen years old, who, having been forced away from his village, and carried as a conscript to the army, had grown mad with the thoughts of home, but by proper treatment might probably have recovered. Beyond this young man was a lively prating Arab, who related with singular fluency the history of his imprisonment, caused, he assured us, by his sister, who, having led him away from his village, had afterwards entrapped him into this place. To him succeeded another Arab, wanton as a satyr, equally talkative, and equally mad. But it is impossible to describe, one by one, all the dwellers in this prison-house. The most fearful examples of

> "Moody madness, laughing wild
> Amid severest woe"—

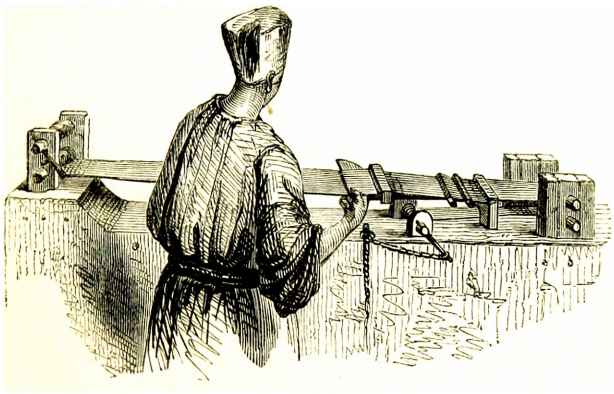
was a Caireen, of respectable family, covered with boils and scars—gaunt, emaciated, and consumed by the fever which had destroyed his intellect. His burning eyeballs, blood-shot, and ready to start from their sockets, were rolling wildly, as he exhibited, in the most shocking manner, the loathsomeness of his disorder. Close to this man was a religious fanatic, who, discovering us to be Franks, was lavish in those terms of abuse, which none but a madman could now utter with impunity in Egypt. Among these lunatics, there was one individual who, having, as he himself related, been guilty of a crime of unspeakable enormity, had been therefore suspected of insanity, and confined in this dismal place, where he was employed in manufacturing hooks-and-eyes: and except that he spoke laughingly of his demoniacal flagitiousness, exhibited no signs of madness. Perhaps, when apprehended, and in danger of condign punishment, he had commenced the appearance of lunacy, to save his forfeit life. The old Arab keeper, who showed us round the building, having been rendered, by long habit, utterly insensible to the misery he witnessed, laughed heartily at their wild incoherent babbling, which to him was merely matter of amusement. How the wretched creatures are fed and treated, I know not. The establishment is sometimes visited by medical men; but the mere appearance and economy of the place are a blot on the character of Mohammed Ali, and prove him to be utterly destitute of the ordinary feelings of humanity. His lions and elephants in the citadel are better housed.

In the adjoining hospital, the arrangements are somewhat superior; though it may still be doubted whether it be a nuisance or a benefit to the public: the rooms open in front, and closed at night with a mat, extending round a filthy court, and being furnished each with a stream of water

stinking like a puddle. A few miserable wooden bedsteads stand in the middle of the apartments, which appeared to contain no other convenience. All the patients, several of whom lay stretched, perhaps in malignant fevers, on their shattered couches, exhibited a squalid, filthy, appearance, causing us to shudder as we passed. The apartments of the governor we did not visit.

From these horrid spectacles, which harrow up and sadden the mind, we proceeded to the bazaars which were, some of them, of great extent and magnificence.* The Turkish shopkeeper uses little art to induce purchasers; sitting in solemn silence, scarcely deeming it worth while to remove the pipe when you wish to see or know the price of anything. But towards each other, or to those Franks whom they know, or who are habited in eastern costume, they are exceedingly courteous, and provide a pipe and coffee during the negotiation. They are sure to ask a Frank, but especially an Englishman, more than five times the value of any article, and will invariably sell cheaper to a Mohammedan.

The bazaar, however, which deserves the most especial attention, is the one situated near the slave-market. It has four entrances from different quarters of the city. Some of the magazines in this khan were devoted entirely to the toilet of the Osmanli lords of the creation, where they could fit themselves out, from the embroidered shirt to the cashmere girdle. Others displayed to the wondering gaze all the paraphernalia requisite for the beauties of the eastern harem, not only the exquisite satin jackets, embossed with flowers, the shirt of silk gauze, and trousers of many colours,

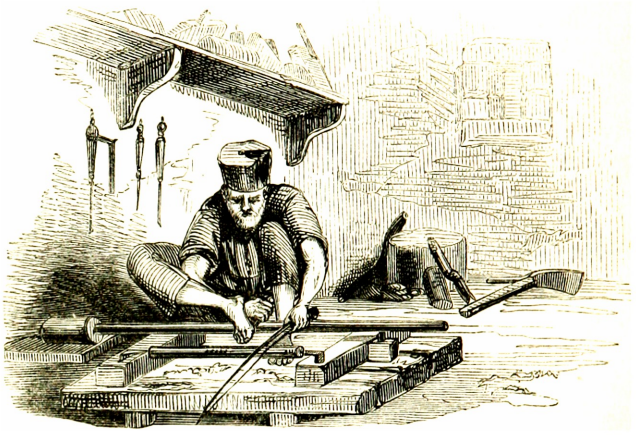


Shawl Weaver.

but the crystal vase, and golden bodkin, the one to hold, and the other with which to apply the khol, that enhances the lustre of the brightest eyes in the world. Then there were tiny looking-glasses set in mother-of-pearl, gold, or gems, and a thousand other trinkets; the little embroidered

* Wilde.

slippers, and the flat rice-spoons, studded with jewels, and composed of ivory or tortoiseshell. Some of the costumes I looked over were magnificent, and composed of the richest materials, often of cloth of gold.



A Turner.

Embroidered handkerchiefs were in abundance; they are used both in the bath and at dinner; they are generally white, worked in gold, and very costly. Near the place where these were exposed for sale, we saw a shawl-weaver plying his trade. Many of the shops were devoted to jewellery, others to pipes and hookahs; the latter were generally of the most splendid description, and the display of crystal vases was quite dazzling. In fact, this bazaar was a union of the Howell and James, and Maradan Casson of Cairo, and must have ruined many an Egyptian and Turkish belle, who has trusted herself within its glittering and tempting precincts. We next visited the Shoe Bazzar, close by. Here hundreds of workmen were employed in fabricating the yellow slippers, boots, and shoes, so universally worn at Cairo, and for which there appears an immense demand.

Thence we proceeded to the Hair-oil Bazaar. It seems an extraordinary name, but it is a very veracious one, for nothing is sold here but scents, oils, and gold-lace, for the hair. We dismounted at the entrance; for the path between the shops is only just wide enough for one person to walk; and where it is necessary to pass another, the squeezing is quite ridiculous. Yet I should think it is full half a mile long, and is covered in. I came with the intention of making some purchases, as my stock of the commodity was almost exhausted; but somehow or another, although I tried at every shop, I could not satisfy my fastidious fancy. It is true, every variety of perfume was offered to my notice, and many were very delicious, yet still they were so unlike anything I had smelt before, and, above all, so un-English,

that visions of grey, or at least *burnt-up* hair,* flitted before my imagination, and I was afraid of choosing, notwithstanding the many fair young forms who were busy around me, fearlessly making their selections.

But to return to the bazaars. It may easily be conceived that aromatic odour was almost overpowering, when I say that every other shop was devoted to hundreds of scented bottles, and the intervening ones to exquisite perfumed head-dresses, consisting of braids of riband and gold-lace, which, when worn, reach to the ground. On each divan sat one or more Muslim *coiffeurs*, whose profession was stamped on their delicately-turned moustache, and glossy silken beards.

We next paid a visit to the locksmith's department, if I may use the term, though the locks were of wood; afterwards we passed on to a warehouse, where the small Turkish tables are sold. Some of them are beautifully inlaid with gold, silver, and mother-of-pearl. The shape is exceedingly elegant, usually an octagon. They are about a foot and a half high, and only large enough to hold one dish; the small prayer-carpets, used by the Muslims; and other commodities. Public auctions are held there twice a week, on Monday and Thursday, on which occasion the khan is so crowded, that it requires some patience and physical power to force a way through. The auctioneer having a shawl, a gun, a turban, or any other

Wooden-Lock Maker.

object fit for sale, stands up in the bazaar and inquires who will bid first. Some person says, "One piastre;" another, "Two;" while the seller, holding up the article, walks to and fro, proclaiming the highest sum offered, until he is satisfied with the price.

The sale begins early in the morning, and lasts till the noon-day prayers. Clothes, old as well as new, shawls, and pipes, elegantly turned articles,

* Mrs. Griffith.

and a variety of other goods, are offered in this manner, by brokers who carry them up and down the market. Several water carriers, each with a goat-skin of water on his back, and a brass cup, for the use of any one who would drink, attend on these occasions. Sherbets of raisins, and bread in round flat cakes, with other eatables, are also cried up and down the market; and, on every auction day, several real or pretended idiots, with a distressing number of other beggars, frequent the khan.

One of the itinerant chapmen was a bookseller, whose stock consisted of certain manuscript copies of the Khoran, enclosed in beautiful cases of embroidered silk, or cloth of gold. On my expressing a desire to purchase one of the volumes, he drew the Khoran out of the case, and, thrusting the manuscript into his bosom, presented me with the envelope, steadily refusing, even for the love of gain, to place the holy volume in the hands of a Christian. Indeed, he would not allow me even to look at it. The different parts of the bazaar are divided from each other by heavy iron chains suspended across the passages, about three feet and a half from the ground, beneath which it is necessary to stoop. Here the thronging and pressing are commonly so great, particularly among the women, who constitute the principal population of the bazaars, that many a lady of rank must frequently, I apprehend, lose her slippers in the crowd. The appearance of the shops, when viewed separately, is far from splendid, no one merchant making any extraordinary display of wealth, or imagining that a profusion of mirrors, or costly gilding, could, in the eyes of his customers, enhance the value of his merchandise: and the general aspect of the bazaar is highly picturesque and striking, from the extraordinary mingling of races, complexions and costumes exhibited, where the half-naked negro, the tattered Arab, the Turk with flowing drapery and majestic beard, and the Greek in his gorgeous and glittering dress, are beheld moving among crowds of ladies, whose black caftans or mantles, open in front, disclose their pink silk garments, and the rich and brilliant shawls encircling their waists.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EGYPTIAN SAINTS.—VISIT TO THE HAREM.

LOCKE, discoursing on notions of modesty, in his book on "Innate Ideas," adduces, as an argument against the popular opinion, the example of the Mohammedan Santons of Egypt, seen by Baumgarten sitting naked among the sands. Whatever our judgment respecting the philosophical theory may be, the example is still exhibited daily at Cairo. On the very evening of my arrival, I saw, jostling through crowds of men and women, a Santon, wholly naked, except that a piece of ragged blanketing was thrown over his shoulders. Covered with filth, squalid, haggard, emaciated, with eyes flashing forth the fire of insanity, he had in all respects the look of a wild beast. No doubt many vagabonds adopt, through mere sloth, this easy mode of living; but when the Pasha shall set himself about the civil-

isation of Egypt, he must begin by sending the whole of this race to the madhouse or the galleys, together with that still more nefarious crew, with perfumed tresses and effeminate costume, who now offend the eye, and disgrace, in the streets of Cairo, the very name of *man*.

With regard to the Santons, or Saints, it may be observed, however, that all by no means deserve to be confounded together in one category. Several of the individuals known under that appellation are not only harmless but extremely pious persons, who do much good during their lives, and at their deaths bequeath the legacy of a worthy example to the world. Such as practise extraordinary austerities may be compared with the Yoghis of Hindostan; though there are, I believe, no well-authenticated instances on record of persons who have inflicted on themselves anything like the amount of self-torture which the Hindoo ascetics cheerfully undergo. It is said that there still lives at Cairo a saint, who, during thirty years, has been chained to the wall of his chamber with an iron collar about his neck. But it is also added, that, from time to time, a blanket is thrown over him, and that when this is removed he is nowhere to be seen. We may, without much want of charity, presume, that this takes place when the devotee is tired of his chain, from which he possesses the means of delivering himself when he thinks proper, together with a trap-door or sliding-panel, in the floor or wall, by which to effect his escape. Be this as it may, no people in the Mohammedan world believe so devoutly in the miraculous powers of saints as the Egyptians. In fact, whatever religion the people of that country have professed, they have connected it with a greater amount of superstition than any other believers in the same creed. An idiot or a fool is vulgarly regarded by them as a being whose mind is in heaven, while his grosser part mingles among ordinary mortals. Whatever enormities a reputed saint may commit, such acts do not affect his fame for sanctity, for they are considered to flow from his soul, or reasoning faculties, being wholly absorbed in devotion, so that his passions are left without control. Some of these saints go about, as we have said, perfectly naked, and are so highly venerated, that the women, instead of avoiding them, sometimes suffer these wretches to take any liberty with them in a public street, and, by the lower orders, are not considered as disgraced by such actions, which, however, are of very rare occurrence. Leo Africanus relates, that walking one day by the door of a public bath, in the market-place of Bam-Elcarsarm, he observed a lady of distinction, and remarkable for her beauty, come out into the street, which she had no sooner done than she was seized and insulted before the whole market by one of those naked saints, who are so numerous in Egypt and the other parts of Africa. The magistrates of the city, who felt that their own wives might next be exposed to equal shame, were desirous of inflicting condign punishment upon the wretch, but were deterred by fear of the populace, who held such audacious impostors in veneration. On her way home after this scene, the woman was followed by an immense multitude, who contended with each other for the honour of touching her clothes, as if some peculiar virtue had been communicated to them by the touch of the saint; and even her husband, when informed of what had happened, expressed the greatest joy; and thanking

God, as if an extraordinary blessing had been conferred upon his family, made a great entertainment, and distributed alms to the poor, who were then taught to look upon such events as highly fortunate.

Some of the saints are seen clad in a cloak, or long coat, composed of patches of various-coloured cloths, adorned with numerous strings of beads, wearing a ragged turban, and bearing a staff with shreds of cloth of various colours attached to the top. The Egyptian Moslems, in common with those of other countries, entertain very curious superstitions respecting the persons whom they call Welis, or Saints. In the first place, if a person seems to express a doubt as to the existence of these Welis, he would be branded with infidelity; and the following passage of the Koran would be adduced to condemn him: "Are not the favourites of God those upon whom no fear shall come, and who shall not be grieved?" This is considered as sufficient to prove that there is a class of persons distinguished above ordinary human beings. The question then suggests itself: "Who, or of what description, are these persons?" and we are answered, "They are persons wholly devoted to God, and possessed of extraordinary faith; and, according to their degree of faith, endowed with the powers of performing miracles."

The most holy of the Welis is termed the Kooteb, who, it is said, is often seen, but not known as such; and the same is believed of all who hold authority under him. He always has a meek demeanour and mean dress; and mildly reproves those whom he finds acting impiously. Though he is unknown to the world, his favourite stations are well known; yet at these places he is seldom visible. It is asserted, that he is almost constantly seated at Mecca, on the roof of the Kaaba; and, though never seen there, is always heard at midnight to call thrice, "O thou most merciful of those who show mercy!" which is then repeated from the madnehs of the temple by the mueddins. Another favourite station of this revered and unknown personage is the gate of Cairo, called Bab-Zuwayleh, one leaf of whose great wooden door, which is never shut, turned back against the eastern side of the interior of the gateway, conceals a small vacant space, said to be the place of the Kooteb. Many persons on passing by it read a prayer; and some give alms to a beggar who is generally seated there, and who is regarded by the vulgar as one of the servants of the Kooteb. Numbers of persons afflicted with headache drive a nail into the door, to charm away the pain; and many sufferers from the toothache extract a tooth, and insert it in a crevice of the door, or fix it in some other way, to insure their not being attacked again by the same malady. Some curious individuals often try to peep behind, in the vain hope of catching a glimpse of the Kooteb. He has many other stations, but of inferior celebrity, in Cairo, as well as one at the tomb of the Seyd Ahmad El-Bedawie, at Tanta, and elsewhere. He is believed to transport himself from Mekka to Cairo in an instant; and so also from any one place to another. Though he has a number of favourite stations, he does not abide solely at these, but wanders throughout the whole world, among persons of every religion, whose appearance, dress, and language he assumes; and distributes to mankind, chiefly through the agency of the subordinate

Welis, acts and blessings, the awards of destiny. When a Kooteb dies, he is immediately succeeded in his office by another. Certain Welis are said to be commissioned by the Kooteb to perform certain offices, which are far from being easy. In illustration of their employments, the following anecdote is related:—A devout tradesman in Cairo, who was ardently desirous of becoming a Weli, applied to a person who was generally believed to belong to this holy class, imploring to be assisted in obtaining the honour of an interview with the Kooteb. The applicant, after having undergone a strict examination as to his motives, was desired to perform the ordinary ablution very early the next morning, then to repair to the Mosque of El-Moo-eyad, and to lay hold of the first person whom he should see coming out of the great door of the mosque. He did so. The first person who came out was an old venerable-looking man, but meanly clad, wearing a brown woollen gown; and this proved to be the Kooteb. The candidate kissed his hand, and intreated to be admitted among the Ashab-ed-Darak, or "Datchmn." After much hesitation the prayer was granted; the Kooteb said, "Take charge of the district which consists of the Durb-el-Ahmar and its immediate neighbourhood:" and immediately the person thus addressed found himself to be a Weli, and perceived that he was acquainted with things concealed from ordinary mortals: for a Weli is said to be acquainted by God with all secrets necessary for him to know. This Weli accordingly, as soon as he had entered upon his office, walked through his district; and seeing a man at a shop, with a jar full of boiled beans before him, from which he was about to serve his customers as usual, took up a large piece of stone, and with it broke the jar. The bean-seller immediately jumped up, seized hold of a palm-stick that lay by his side, and gave the Weli a severe beating: but the holy man complained not, nor did he utter a cry: as soon as he was allowed, he walked away. When he was gone, the bean-seller began to try if he could not gather up some of the scattered contents of the jar. A portion of the jar remained in its place; and on looking into this, he saw a venomous serpent in it, coiled round, and dead. In horror at what he had done, he exclaimed, "There is no strength nor power but in God! I implore forgiveness of God, the Great! What have I done! This man is a Weli; and has prevented my selling what would have poisoned my customers." He looked at every passenger all that day, in the hope of seeing again the saint whom he had thus injured, that he might implore his forgiveness, but he saw him not; for he was too much bruised to be able to walk. On the following day, however, with his limbs still swollen from the blows he had received, the Weli limped through his district, and broke a great jar of milk at a shop not far from that of the bean-seller, and its owner treated him as the bean-seller had done the day before; but, while he was beating him, some persons ran up and stopped his hand, informing him that the person whom he was thus punishing was a Weli, and relating to him the affair of the serpent that was found in the jar of beans. "Go and look," said they, "in your jar of milk, and you will find at the bottom of it something either poisonous or unclean." He looked, and found, in the remains of the jar, a dead dog. On the third day, the Weli, with the help

of a staff, hobbled painfully up the Durb-el-Ahmar, and saw a servant carrying upon his head a supper-tray, covered with dishes of meat, vegetables, and fruit, for a party who were going to take a repast in the country. He put his staff between the servant's legs and overthrew him, and the contents of the dishes were scattered in the street. With a mouthful of curses, the servant immediately began to give the saint as severe a thrashing as he himself expected to receive from his disappointed master for this accident; but several persons soon collected around him, and one of these bystanders observed a dog eat part of the contents of one of the dishes, and, a moment after, fall down dead: he instantly seized the hand of the servant, and informed him of the circumstance, which proved that the man whom he had been beating was a Weli. Every apology was made to the injured saint, with many prayers for his forgiveness; but he was so disgusted with his new office, that he implored God and the Kooteb to release him from it; and, in answer to his solicitations, his supernatual powers were withdrawn; and he returned to his shop more contented than before.*

The breast of the common swallow in Egypt, as Sir Frederick Henniker has already observed, is quite *red*, and not white, as with us. Does this breed form a peculiar species not migratory? Dénon found in this country a kind of swallow of a grey colour, which was not, he conjectured, a bird of passage; though, even so far back as the time of Anacreon, the swallow was supposed to forsake Greece with the summer, to spend the cold months about Memphis and the Nile. Yet the winter nights, as most travellers have observed, are exceedingly cold in Lower Egypt; and indeed, when you reflect upon the great heat of the days, the keenness of the air, all the while that the sun is below the horizon, is almost incredible. On the first of December, the sun was as hot as in July in Burgundy: towards evening a cloak was quite necessary, as was also an additional covering on the bed at night. Everywhere in the shade it is cold even by day; and there is a strong breeze constantly stirring, which increases the sharpness of the atmosphere, and renders it, even in the sunshine, prudent to go warmly clothed. To the neglect of this precaution may be attributed many of those dangerous attacks of fever and dysentery experienced by travellers in Egypt. In building their cities, the Orientals generally, but particularly the Egyptians, have been greatly influenced by the above peculiarity in their climate. Their streets are winding and narrow, as in such countries they must be, to render the cities habitable; for by this contrivance they are protected by night from the extreme cold, and from the intolerable heat by day. For the same reason it is an advantage that the houses are lofty, and almost meet at the top. We observe, moreover, that in the bazaars and streets of business, where the inhabitants chiefly assemble, mats are extended from house to house, wholly to exclude the sun, which in summer is not to be endured from eight o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon. By these means, however, there is always, in the streets of Cairo, a fine cool air stirring; and when you enter its gates from the desert, where

* Lane.

the wind is sometimes like the blast of a furnace, your whole frame is instantaneously refreshed, and you bless the architect who invented narrow streets.

Among the curiosities of Cairo, I had often heard enumerated the palace of Ahmed Pasha, which had recently been erected, and had the reputation of being the handsomest building in Cairo. From all that I have seen, it appears well worthy of its renown. It consists of two stories, in each of which there is a vast hall, in the shape of a Greek cross; and in the corner, which, in a square building, are created by this arrangement, the other apartments are situated. These rooms are all fitted up in an eminently striking and gorgeous style: the ceilings are covered with gilded arabesques, the walls and cornices with paintings; and the principal apartments are adorned with clustered columns, surmounted by gilded capitals, with elegant niches or recesses, and furnished with the most superb divans of crimson velvet, skirted with gold fringe a foot deep. In the harem, the divans, cushions, &c., are of light flowered satin, with gold borders of great depth. The sleeping apartments of the women,—which, the ladies being in the old palace, we were allowed to visit,—were exceedingly light and airy, and furnished with handsome glass windows. The furnishing, the lock fastenings, &c., however, were of inferior workmanship. In one of the great halls we saw two beautiful fountains; the one, fashioned in the wall, descending like a series of shells, sculptured in marble, and increasing in size from the top downwards, poured its sparkling waters into two serpentine channels, cut in the marble pavement, and containing the figures of various species of fish, which communicated with the second fountain. This, however, was merely a large marble basin, sunk in the floor, with a column of water rising and falling in its centre.

Caireen Lady

As it was not permitted me to view the harem peopled by its fair inmates, I shall borrow from a female traveller her description of a visit to an establishment similar to that of Ahmed Pasha, though on an inferior and much smaller scale. The lady was indebted for her introduction to a French woman, who supplied the harem with trinkets. "Half an hour's ride brought us," says she,* "to the Turkish quarters of the city, the most open and handsome in Cairo; for here the court-yards are large, and some

* Mrs. Postans. See her lively and interesting work entitled "Facts and Fictions;" of which the most valuable part is that which relates to India, and the manners and customs of its inhabitants.

of them have trees, with a few rays of sunshine flickering among the higher branches. At one of the largest of these courts we stopped, and, dismounting from our donkeys, walked forward to a spacious doorway, shaded with a heavy curtain of green cloth, covered with red embroidery. This being lifted by a female slave richly dressed, and a eunuch, we found ourselves at the foot of a handsome flight of marble stairs, covered with fine matting, and decorated with numerous pairs of small slippers of red and yellow morocco, the soles of the same material as the upper leather, soft, and without stiffening. Here my conductress divested herself of her out-of-door shroudings, and we ascended to a spacious hall, matted in a similar way, and hung with handsome chandeliers. About this hall a number of slave-girls were standing, all Mussulmans, gaily and handsomely dressed, and wearing great quantities of gold, silver, and coloured ornaments. We were next shown into an apartment of splendid dimensions, the floor tesselated marble, and the arabesque ornaments of the window-frames relieved by rich painted glass; the walls are elegantly stencilled with very beautiful devices in French taste, and a raised divan surrounded the room, of pale blue satin, richly embroidered with gold flowers. In addition to this, small cushions and pillows were placed at the upper end of the apartment, of various colours, but similarly embroidered, some of pale green, others of blue and rose satin.

"After a short time passed in admiring the good taste and splendour of this Turkish room, the three young wives of Sami Pasha appeared, two of them hand in hand, the first wife and the last; the second walked alone, a little behind the others; she might feel aggrieved, and fancy the last importation of beauty more affected her interests and influence than they did those of the earlier bride. Having greeted me courteously, all sat down on the divans, and I had an opportunity to admire them at leisure. They appeared to be about the same age, probably fifteen; their faces were round, fat, and particularly fair, but the countenances of two were totally devoid of all expression; while the third, the last beloved, had a shrewish look, that augured ill, I thought, for the peace of the fourth bride, whenever it might please the Pasha to complete his conjugal establishment. The dress and decorations of the ladies varied in colours only; in richness, material, and style, they were precisely alike; and strange and grotesque enough they looked, as may be supposed from a description. Faces, naturally pretty, were rendered laughable by misapplied care to make them more beautiful; the fine dark eye-brow was painted in a brown arch of light sienna, extending from the temple to the centre of the nose; a large arch, like a black wafer, was stained on the lower part of the forehead, and the cheeks were highly rouged, until they emulated the inner leaves of a full-blown rose. This combination of pink, black and white, gave a most Grimaldi-like appearance to the faces of my pretty friends, and its singularity was increased rather than diminished, by their head-dresses. These consisted of a small tarbouche or red cap, with a depending purple tassel, around which was wound a rich handkerchief, the whole worn very far back upon the head, with plaits of hair folded over it. On this handkerchief were clasped, on either temple, superb sprays of diamonds, cut and set

in the English style, sparkling with great brilliancy, and of enormous value; but the effect of these was spoilt by the centre ornament, which consisted of a tuft of short hair, curling upwards, and mixed with a bunch of common paper artificial flowers, placed so as to stand upright from the centre of the brow. The costume consisted of a figured satin boddice, of the Levantine form, with full trousers, and a sort of pelisse worn over them, terminating in a train, which, as the ladies walked, were supported by little slave-boys; a fine Cashmere shawl, wound lightly round the waist, completed the costume. The materials of these dresses were of the richest description,—French satins, figured with gold and silver, or brocades of the most exquisite colours and fabric; and among them I recognised many of the beautiful articles I had admired in the Turkish dress-bazaars of El Khaleda, particularly the Constantinopolitan embroideries of coloured silk on fine white muslins, and the handkerchiefs and napkins worked and fringed with gold. In the whole attire of these Turkish girls, there was nothing barbaric; the fabric and jewels were all of European fashion, and very beautiful. All that a critic could have objected to, was the free use of disfiguring cosmetics, and in one or two cases, in consequence of the season, the adoption of a finely-embroidered cloth jacket, worn over the Levantiue boddice, and looking very much as if it had been borrowed from the wardrobe of the Pasha.

"After a short time had elapsed, a fourth lady entered similarly attired. but considerably older than the rest; she was still handsome, however, and the rouge, which disfigured the youthful faces, tended certainly to render hers more agreeable. This lady was followed by a troop of Circassian slave-girls, and on her approach the young wives of the Pasha arose, and put the hem of her robes to their lips. My conductress whispered me that she was the mother of their husband, and, consequently, chief in the harem. I thought there was something peculiarly pleasing in the manner of this lady, and fancied that, if the Pasha resembled her, his young wives might justly feel a little jealous of his affections; but, fortunately, such things are unknown among Moslem ladies, and when any dislike is taken to a slave who may be a chance favourite, the husband obligingly removes her from the harem; but even an objection of this kind, I am told, is very rare. On the contrary, the ladies and attendants generally well understand their position; and should the husband unduly interfere, or attempt in any way to reduce expenses, or infringe the rules of courtesy and custom, the harem makes common cause against him; and, it is said, solemn and dignified as the Turk looks abroad, he wears a more subdued aspect under the attack of female tongues, which sometimes greets the poor man in domestic life. Only imagine four wives, and fifty slave-girls, clamorous against some real or fancied outrage or privation, and then say if the Turk, with all his pipes, coffee, and prospective houries, is a happier man than he who hath but to endure the single-wived reproaches of the shrew whom ill-fortune may have given to his bosom.

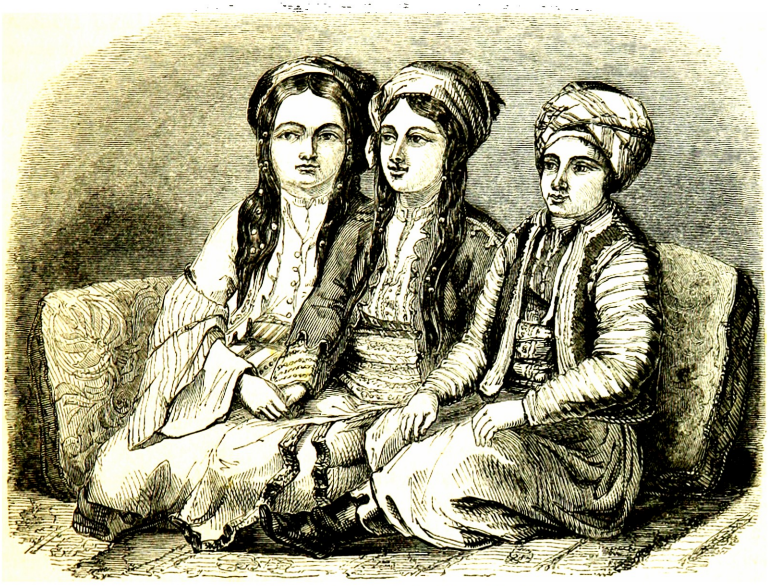
"After chatting for a short time through the medium of my conductress, who spoke Turkish fluently, three Circassian girls entered, dressed in a costume similar to that of their mistresses, and, excepting the jewels, in

fabrics of nearly equal richness. On coming into the apartment, they stood with folded arms a little on one side, and were followed by three black slaves, two bearing silver salvers, covered with gold-embroidered napkins, and the third having a jewelled censer, from which rare perfumes were scattered round the apartment. At a signal from the lady mother, the slaves bearing the salvers advanced to me, and, removing the napkins, one appeared with richly-cut tumblers, filled with artificially-cooled water of the most perfect clearness, and the other supported vases of sweetmeats, consisting of cakes made of honey and fruits, with small gold spoons and saucers. After this refreshment, the slaves again took their places on either side of the door, and two more entered, bearing coffee in a similar way, the little China cups being held in outer cases of filigree silver-work. The coffee is never handed on the tray, but gracefully presented by the attendant, holding the little stand between the thumb and finger of the right hand.* To receive our cups, of the contents of which we drank about two-thirds, another slave approached, with a large white embroidered kerchief, ostensibly for the purpose of wiping the mouth; but any lady would be thought quite a novice who did more than touch it with her lips. Immediately after coffee, Circassian slaves brought to each lady a chibouk twisted with gold and silver, with silver bowls and amber mouth-pieces; which they smoked, terrible as the custom may seem to our English notions, in a very lady-like pretty way, gracefully reclining on their cushions, while the slave-girls, with grave countenances and folded arms, stood respectfully before them. There was to me something peculiarly disagreeable about these Circassians; they were tall, much taller than the Turkish ladies, with fine figures, brilliantly fair complexions, highly rouged, and eyes and hair intensely black: handsome, therefore, particularly handsome; and yet the style of beauty had that Gulnare-like expression, which led one rather to tremble than admire. There was neither softness nor feeling in the gaze of these fair Odalisques, but the expression was altogether fierce, stern, and betraying a capability for any but gentle deeds. As I glanced from the round, soft, baby-like faces of the Turkish mistresses, to the haughty, imperious countenances of the Circassian slaves, and thought of them as spies over the wives and favourites of the master, I pitied the poor girls more for their companionship than for all that Turkish despotism might do: it seemed like the union of the sparrow with the hawk; and quite sure am I, that the mistress in a Turkish harem often trembles at the power of the slave."

We must not, however, generalize too hastily. The interior of other families presents an extremely different picture, where mistress and slave exhibit much the same character, both swayed by the same influences of climate and position. Describing the ladies of a different harem, another female traveller observes, "They were nearly all natives of Syria, Circassia, and Georgia, and I thus had leisure to survey those beauties who enjoy so much celebrity. They undoubtedly merit their reputation; I can, however, tell my fair countrywomen, to comfort them, and to do justice to truth, that Europe certainly can boast of beauties equal to those of the East.

* Mrs. Pool.

Those whom I had now the pleasure of seeing, had the most amiable countenances, and delicate and regular features; but what most attracted my admiration was their hair, which fell in natural and waving curls down to



Children of Suleiman Pasha (Colonel Sèves).

their waist. They had each preserved their national costume, which agreeably varied this pretty parterre; nor had they adopted the tresses of the Egyptian women, which rather disfigure than improve the appearance. They had exquisitely beautiful teeth, but the clearness and bloom of youth were banished from their complexions; they all had a languid air, and I did not find among them that *embonpoint* which I had expected to meet. Perhaps their sedentary mode of life, and the destructive climate of Egypt, have contributed to tarnish the lustre of their charms. The climate of Egypt, otherwise so salubrious, exercises a malignant influence upon female beauty." *

"The mother of the Pasha apologized for not entertaining me with music and dancing, one of their most common amusements; but as it was the feast of Beiram, a marriage was celebrating at the house of a friend; and the slaves, who would otherwise have performed, had been permitted to attend the feast. The young ladies, however, displayed a variety of Turkish embroideries, all most beautiful in fabric and design, consisting, principally, of floss-silk and gold flowers wrought on a clear muslin ground; but, unlike the Kincaub manufactures and embroideries of India, these rich articles are

* The Baronness Von Minutoli.

unwashable. Their expense as costumes must be enormous. Turkish ladies usually embroider very beautifully, yet the wives of Sami Pasha absolutely did nothing but stroll from room to room, sip coffee, smoke chibouks, dress and re-dress themselves three or four times during the day. They obligingly offered to show me over their apartments, and the whole party set forth, the ladies shuffling along, much encumbered by loose trousers, soleless slippers, and trains borne by little eunuchs, with Circassian slaves following with pipes, and the negress with the censer making up the group.

"The apartments were all spacious, and furnished in similar fashion to that in which I had been received; in some were fountains of alabaster, however, to afford refreshment in the summer season; and in others, lines of mirrors set in the walls. The bath-rooms were all lined with alabaster, having fountains of hot and cold water; but, curiously enough, the baths were not formed for reclining in, but were square and small, and probably about five feet deep, without steps, but with a crimson cord from the ceiling, by which the bather swung herself into the bath. I saw the calcined Mekka stone, commonly used by the Cairo women, and the fibres of the Arabian palm, both necessary to the bath toilet of the Turkish ladies, which in Egypt is a ceremony of no short endurance, nor common labour, rendering very necessary the rest afforded by the divan of the dressing-room, with its pipes and coffee.

"From the harem we strolled forth into a garden of tolerable dimensions, but with a wall of hopeless height. The caged birds were here safe enough, and women of the rank of the Pasha's wives seldom leave home, unless to visit a friend on some state occasion, when they are strictly guarded. The garden contained several varieties of Oriental and European plants, and particularly the hennah, which the Turkish ladies, like the other Orientals, use abundantly. I could not discover, either in the garden or the house, a single object calculated to afford my new friends amusement; there were no birds, nor fawns, nor tame fish to pet, no pictures to be looked at, children to be caressed, nor toys to be wearied of; their whole life seemed passed in apathetic idleness."

A glance at a humbler harem reveals a somewhat different state of things. A German lady, who visited the female establishment of an ulema, describes what she saw with much vivacity, but is rather inclined to put a harsh construction upon whatever she saw in the slightest degree differing from European manners. "On my entrance," she says, "they all crowded round me with expressions of noisy gaiety; they were like a troop of young foals liberated from the rein. I am not aware whether they had been informed of my visit; not having an interpreter, it was impossible for me to converse with them. There were in the harem none but Arab or Egyptian women, and some negro slaves; they did not appear to be so well bred as Turkish ladies in general are; and their indelicate style of dress forced me to avert my eyes. They tormented me with their curiosity about my toilet; and their importunity became so troublesome, that, wearied with their noise, of which I comprehended nothing, and dreading the fate of the cock stripped of his feathers in the fable, I resolved to

escape, notwithstanding their efforts to detain me, glad to be free from them, and to return to the protection of my husband."

By way of contrast with this last description, we shall accompany another lady into one of the more fashionable harems of Cairo. Our conductress in the first place minutely describes the apartments appropriated to the use of the ladies; but as we have already given the reader an exact idea of the interior of an Egyptian house, it is unnecessary to enter into any further details on that subject. Of the fair inmates, however, we will permit our female traveller to speak at full length:—"Seated cross-legged on a pile of violet-coloured cushions, that were placed on the pavement close to a fountain, was a beautiful and majestic-looking woman. Although she must have been at least forty, not a wrinkle was to be detected in her fine clear skin, which shows that the beauty of women is not always so short-lived in the East as is commonly supposed. Her features were remarkably handsome; her teeth perfect and very white; while her dark blue eyes shone forth with benignity. I never saw such a countenance, so dignified and at the same time so sweet. Her hair was entirely concealed by a rich embroidered handkerchief, or far'oo'dee'yeh, bound round the head-dress, or tarboosh. She was dressed in a shirt composed of a kind of silk gauze, white as snow, and a pair of very wide trousers, of the same material, fastened round the waist, and confined a little below the knee, but sufficiently long to hang down to the feet. A short vest, called 'an'ter'ee, reaching just below the waist, and provided with loose open sleeves, completed her costume. Her only ornaments were five rows of very large-sized pearls, suspended from her neck. This lady was the widowed mother of Mochtah Bey's wife. She did not rise to receive us (as she was our senior in years), but touched my hand with her right hand, pressed it on her bosom, and then raised it to her lips and forehead. She would not hear of my taking a seat upon the divan, as she said she knew the European custom, but despatched a pretty Georgian slave for a green satin chair (the only one in the house), upon which she made me sit down close to her. She then asked me a variety of questions. I satisfied her curiosity as well as I could, and she appeared much amused with my answers. Her voice was peculiarly mild and sweet, and she uttered her various interrogations with as much grace and politeness as if she were carrying on the most polished and intellectual conversation. After the first tide of queries, she told me her daughter would soon be there, as she was particularly anxious to make the acquaintance of an English lady. I had now a moment's leisure to look around at the groups of beautiful slaves that were standing about the room in various attitudes, laughing and pointing at my dress. They were principally Georgians and Circassians, many of them exceedingly lovely, with fair complexions and dark eyes. All were dressed in the most costly materials, generally of gaudy colours; and two or three of the prettiest wore very handsome ornaments of gold filigree and precious stones. Their dresses were much handsomer than those of their mistresses; but I believe it is the delight of the Turkish ladies to deck out their favourite slaves in all their most valuable clothes and trinkets, while they themselves, except on particular occasions, dress very simply.

"At length the mistress of the house made her appearance, and a lovely creature she was. Her complexion was the whitest and most brilliant that can be imagined; her forehead was lofty and entirely exposed, for her auburn hair, escaping from her far'oo'dee'yeh in careless plaits and tresses, was according to the Turkish fashion, clipped close round her face. Her teeth, which she constantly displayed through her rosy laughing lips, were beautifully even, and transparently white; while the effect produced by her magnificent eyes, of the deepest and softest blue, was heightened by the coquettish pencilling of khol, with which both the upper and under lids and eyebrows were stained. This gives a depth and shadow to the intensity of their beauty, in the same way that an appropriate setting enhances the brilliancy of a diamond.

"Her dress was nearly similar to her mother's, excepting that her 'an'ter'ee was cut in such a manner as to leave her neck uncovered save by the slight folds of her low gauze shirt, entirely displaying her shape. Her arms were bare, and perfect models of beauty, both in form and colour; while the small taper fingers of her pretty hands were tipped with the rosy dye of the hennah.

"She advanced towards me with the peculiar walk of all Turkish ladies, and having saluted me in the same way her mother had done before, sat herself down on a similar pile of cushions in another part of the room, inviting me to sit close to her. Again I had to answer a string of questions, and then she told me that her husband, Mochtah Bey, was a very handsome man; and she named his height, and the length of his beard; that he was very learned, and that Mohamed Ali had sent him to England, where he remained a year, and that when he came back again, he would no longer eat with his fingers, but had tables and chairs made, and used a knife and fork; but as he died a short time ago, she had parted with these useless incumbrances, and was soon going to marry again. She appeared exceedingly proud of being able to embroider a little; this is considered a great accomplishment amongst Eastern ladies. Her great grief, she said, was, that she had never been a mother; but in order to console herself in some measure, she was adopting a poor child that had been taken out of the streets, and was bringing it up as her own. She now despatched a slave for the infant, which was brought in by the wet-nurse, its kind protectress had purchased for it. It was a little girl of about eight or ten months old; I thought it very ugly, and it was miserably and shabbily dressed. As soon, however, as it entered the room, my lovely hostess took it in her arms, and nursed and played with it as fondly as if it had been her own: it seemed the pet and darling of the whole harem. Presently it began to cry, and there was quite a commotion: the elder lady took out one of the cucumbers from the fruit that was cooling in the fountain and gave it to the child to suck. I should have thought that this was enough to kill it, but all the children here are constantly to be seen nibbling something of the kind, which may account in part for their wretched health. I find the reason the baby was dressed so badly proceeded from the fear, common to all Muslim mothers, lest finery should attract the evil eye. Another pet of the young Turk's that struck me as a very extraordinary

one for a person of her creed, was a little pug-dog, running about unconstrained all over the apartment, even upon the leewa'n, which is considered sacred, as being the usual place of prayer; but notwithstanding this little piece of uncleanness, was allowed full liberty, and every moment polluted the clothes of his mistress by rubbing up against them. She even patted him several times with her fair hand, and laughed at his barks and antics. I could not understand this incongruity. The next thing to be done was to inspect minutely everything I had on; my rings were scrutinised and admired separately. I wore a black satin gown, and was asked why it was not green, blue, or yellow. I replied, that as I was travelling I could not carry all my wardrobe about with me. My bracelets were next looked at; then my hands were examined. A very large and handsome brooch I wore particularly attracted the attention of the lady: she begged me to take it off, that she might examine it, and then very quietly fastening it into the folds of her shirt, continued talking upon other subjects. I waited some time, and then, as she did not offer to return it, and as I did not feel at all inclined to present her with it, I represented my fears to my companion, who quietly suggested that it was so heavy, she feared it would tear the gauze of her chemise, and offered to assist her in unclasping it. She took the hint, although evidently disappointed; and I felt quite sorry that I had not brought something that I prized less, to present her with. Had I done so, she would no doubt have returned the compliment. During the time we were engaged laughing and talking with the daughter, the mother remained nearly silent, listening to what was going forward, sometimes suggesting a question in her soft harmonious Turkish, that seemed to accord and blend with the musical trickling of the clear fountain before her. She was delighted at the admiration I bestowed upon the latter, and ordered one of her slaves to show me how the jet was turned on and off. The cock was concealed in a small chest of inlaid wood, and the water supplied by pipes laid on from the river. A variety of fruits were placed in the basin to cool, and near it stood a handsome silver tray of porous goblets, each furnished with a fanciful stopper of the same material. Two pretty Georgian slaves now came in with coffee they had been preparing, one carrying the coffee-pot of solid gold, and exceedingly handsome; the other bearing a silver tray, with the requisite number of china cups. According to Eastern etiquette, the ladies of the house were served first, and then their guests. The coffee was extremely strong, and highly perfumed with ambergris; no milk was mixed with it, and no sugar, excepting in the cup destined for me, which was made as sweet as syrup, in order to accommodate, as was supposed, my English taste. As soon as we had finished sipping our coffee, pipes were brought: one was offered me, but I begged to decline, explaining, that as I had never learnt the accomplishment of smoking, I feared it would choke me, and thus materially interrupt our agreeable conversation. They laughed, and appeared much amused at my ignorance of this, one of their greatest and most refined luxuries. They asked if English ladies never smoked, and being answered in the negative, shrugged their shoulders with pity, and began to puff away with renewed vigour.

"Their pipes were quite as long, but rather more slender than those of the men, and exquisitely ornamented in a very costly manner; the mouth-pieces were composed in part of red coral, set in gold, and enriched by agate and jasper, interspersed with precious stones. The pipes are always of jasmine-wood or cherry-stick, but these were covered with coloured silks interwoven with gold thread; the bowl of each rested in a small silver tray, placed on the floor. The tobacco they employed was exceedingly mild, and not disagreeable. The idea of a woman smoking conveys immediately to one's mind a feeling of disgust, which it seems impossible to overcome; but my fair hostesses handled their jewelled pipes with as much grace as if they were the wands of a fairy, and performed the whole with so much elegance of manner, that I found myself admiring instead of condemning the practice. The fair young Hanoum looked positively bewitching while inhaling the perfumed weed through her delicate pipe, and far from obstructing, it appeared only to give zest to her conversation. It was now proposed that I should explore the house, but as the hour of mid-day prayer was near, its young mistress did not accompany us; we were followed, however, by the whole suite of slaves, laughing and dancing around like a pack of children pleased with a new toy. In the court-yard we encountered a group of hideous black human beings, tall and bony, with only a small piece of cloth wound round their bodies, and their hair hanging in dishevelled plaits about their faces. Thinking they looked anything but feminine, and forgetting for a moment where I was, I asked very innocently whether they were men slaves. The screams of surprise and horror, mingled with laughter, that were raised as soon as this question was translated, were quite deafening. The very idea of a man being admitted into these mysterious precincts, shocked them beyond measure, and yet it equally amused them. They pointed to the eunuch, and assured me he was the only man, excepting the deceased master of the house, who had ever seen them unveiled.

"The slaves in question, whose rough appearance had occasioned my mistake, were Africans and Negro women, who acted as menials in the establishment. The only employment of the *white slaves* is to make the coffee, prepare and light the pipes, and adorn their own persons, as well as those of their mistresses, and consequently a large portion of their time is spent in idleness. After passing through a number of rooms, we arrived at one which, to me, was the most curious and interesting I had yet seen: it looked towards the garden, and was more in the Turkish style than any of the others, being free from every attempt at Parisian fashions. Rude representations of buds and flowers were painted all over the plastered walls, and one side of the apartment was wholly occupied by a row of curious little cupboards. The windows projected outwards, and were entirely shaded by thick wooden lattice-work, of a very heavy pattern, but beautifully and elaborately carved; the top and sides were of coloured glass, and the small ceilings were inlaid with great art and effect. This was originally intended as the guest-chamber, but at present it was occupied by my young hostess, whose bedstead was inlaid throughout with ivory and mother-o'-pearl, similar to the beautiful Bombay boxes, and by the side were her tiny embroidered slippers.

"Every one had taken off her shoes at the entrance of the apartments. I was the only person of the party of whom this ceremony was not exacted. When we had seen all that was worthy of notice, we went down stairs again to take our leave, but we found the young Khanoum at her devotions, and as she could not be interrupted, we waited until they were concluded. She was standing upon the 'leewa'n,' which is generally appropriated as the place of prayer; a small prayer-carpet was spread before her, and a richly-worked white lace veil was thrown over her head, reaching nearly to the ground. It is the custom amongst Muslim women never to appear in supplication before their Maker unveiled; it has a touching look of modest humility, at least it gave such to the fair worshipper before me. She went through the various evolutions of bowing and prostrations enjoined by her religion with so much gravity and apparent earnestness, that it inspired me with a feeling of respect for her, that heightened the charm of her beauty.

"During all this time the mother, who was still smoking her shibouk, went on talking and asking me questions about what we thought of the rooms, as if nothing had been going on. At length the prayer was finished, the veil thrown aside, and our pretty friend returned to her cushions, her mouth still moving as if concluding her devotions. We now rose to take leave; but she begged us to walk through the garden before our departure. She pressed me, also, to repeat my visit, and told me, that any day I would send them word, I might bring my husband to show him the garden, and they would look through the lattice-work of their windows at him, as they wished so much to see what he was like. They both rose to bid me adieu, and, after having gone through the same form of touching my hand and then their own bosoms and faces, they accompanied me through the inner courts, walking along on the cold marble without shoes or stockings. I must here remark that their feet were very small and pretty. The young one was, perhaps, a little too fat, but among the Turks that is considered a beauty. The last thing she did was to ask me to bring my husband to see the garden.* "

* Mrs. Griffiths.

CHAPTER XIX.

GARDENS OF SHOUBRA.—PASHA'S STUD.

ONE afternoon we rode to Shoubra, where Mohammed Ali has a country-house. The exterior of the building exhibits nothing remarkable. On ascending a terrace a few feet square, we passed through a rough wooden door, such as is fit only for an out-house, and found ourselves in the Pasha's room of audience. It was matted, and round the walls was fixed a row of cushions, on two corners of which were placed satin pillows, marking the seat the Pasha occupied according to the position of the sun. Just over a low ledge in the door we stepped into a small room, with a bedding on the floor; this was his sleeping-chamber. Surely, never monarch had so little luxury or state. Thence we came at once to the magnificent suite of apartments appropriated to the chief lady of the harem.

The centre of the principal room formed a sort of octagon, with three recesses, all inlaid with marble. From the four corners opened four smaller rooms, fitted with splendid divans and cushions of velvet and cloth of gold; and a set of marble baths completed this series of elegant apartments. The ceilings, executed by a Greek artist, were lofty and vaulted, ornamented with gold and representations of landscapes, or of palaces and colonnades; the whole painted in light and pleasing colours.

The Sultana's private sitting-room, says Mrs. Lushington, was still more sumptuous. The ceiling consisted of a circus of palaces, the columns and arches of which were delineated with a most successful regard to perspective. These apartments were, until lately, occupied by the Pasha's deceased wife, mother of Ibrahim Pasha, by a former husband. Their splendour was singularly contrasted with the plainness of those inhabited by the Pasha himself. This led one of my friends to ask if I was not penetrated with so convincing a proof of the gallantry of the Turk; and he challenged me to cite the English husband who would have done so much for the exclusive gratification of his wife. To which I could only reply, that, with my erratic propensities, I should not willingly resign the privilege of locomotion for such proof of affection; and that I apprehended few Englishwomen would answer either the Pasha's or Sancho Panza's idea of a good wife, by continually remaining, according to the latter's proverb, "like an honest woman, at home, as if her leg were broken."

Mohammed Ali's late consort had great influence over him during her life, as he considered his marriage with her the foundation of his good fortune. She was esteemed and beloved by the people, for her influence was ever employed on the side of justice and mercy. Much of her time was occupied in receiving petitions; but it was seldom she had to refer them to the Pasha, as her power was too well known by the ministers to require this last appeal. If, however, in consequence of any demur on

their part, she had to apply to him, he answered their remonstrance by saying, "It is enough. By my two eyes! if she requires it, the thing must be done, be it through fire, water, or stone." His Highness, during the heats of summer, sits below, in a room particularly adapted for coolness, and having a marble fountain in the centre. On one of the walls is inscribed, in large Arabic characters, a verse from the Koran, signifying, "An hour of justice is worth seventy days of prayer."

The gardens of Shoubra are certainly among the finest I have anywhere seen. They cover, perhaps, thirty or forty acres of ground, and are laid out in squares, parallelograms, triangles, &c., divided from each other by long straight alleys, formed, in many cases, with a hard kind of cement; in others, paved with pebbles of different colours, disposed in mosaics, like those in the grottoes of the Isola Bella, and representing various objects of nature or art, as plants, flowers, sabres, &c. In some places there are trellissed arbours and marble fountains. The different compartments of the gardens are surrounded by railings, surmounting a broad stone basement, upon which are ranged, in pots, innumerable exotic flowers, of the richest fragrance and most brilliant colours. The choicest, perhaps, of these were clustered round that tasteful alcove, where the Pasha sometimes spends an hour or two in the calm summer nights. Flowering shrubs and odoriferous plants, with lemon, orange, citron, and pomegranate trees, loaded with golden fruit, deeply impregnated the whole air with perfume, and recalled by their beauty the fabled gardens of the Hesperides, which, like these, were situated in the sands of Africa. Great taste and judgment have been exhibited in the laying out of these grounds. The vistas are exquisite. Rows of cypresses, the favourites of the Egyptian Pan, on one hand; mimosas, the growth of the Arabian wilderness, on the other. Here dark evergreens extend their heavily-laden boughs, tempting the eye with the most delicate fruit; there, shrubs, coveted solely for their beauty, delight the senses with their rich and fragrant blossoms. These gardens, as well as those at Rhoda, are intersected by numerous small canals. The principal ones are of hewn stone, but the subordinate branches are merely cut with the spade; and from these the water is made to overflow, or diverted into new channels, by damming them up with the foot.*

The baths, which cover at least an acre of ground, are of a quadrangular form, and consist of a number of kiosks, united by colonnades, with elegant slender pillars of white stone or marble, ranged round a large square basin, occasionally filled with water, but now empty. Here a small boat, at this time under repair, is sometimes paddled about for the amusement of the Pasha or his ladies. In the centre of the basin are the baths of the harem, formed of marble, and adorned with sculptured figures of crocodiles. The kiosks are small but handsome buildings, containing dressing-rooms, with divans, &c., where the Pasha and his family take coffee after bathing, and sometimes sup. The effect of the whole upon the eye at night, when the baths are filled with water, and the apartments and colonnades brilliantly lighted up, must no doubt be fine; but by day, when closely examined,

* Kinnear, p. 30.

the whole has an air of shabbiness and decay; the stones of the pavement are loose, the entablatures in many places broken, the rooms dirty, the doors out of repair. In fact, the whole affair, it is quite evident, was got up by the Pasha rather to dazzle the Turks than to suit his own tastes, which are exceedingly plain; and he has now grown tired of the toy.

In the gardens, his Highness has a second menagerie, a few English deer, a kangaroo, and four giraffes, fine beautiful animals, three of which died of cold during one winter; the fourth, when its life was despaired of, was given to an English gentleman, resident at Cairo, by whom it was sent as a present to some menagerie in London. The Pasha has likewise a stud here, in which were a great many horses, in open places ranged round a yard, like bullock-sheds in England. Several of them were milk-white. The groom pretended they were all Nejdis; some few, however, were from Dongola. Amongst others I remarked a small dark chestnut horse, of the true blood, as his points would testify. He had a fine snake head, with an expanding and projecting nostril; but, contrary to English ideas of perfection, a remarkably small pointed ear. His forehead was wide, with an eye expressive of boldness, generosity, and alacrity. His shoulder was thick through, and finely laid back; his ribs and loins were round and deep; his legs short and very powerful, the hoof being rather donkey-formed, with an open heel; and, from his muscular thighs and longish drooping pasterns, there is no doubt he will be elastic, speedy, and lasting. The groom said he was worth some hundred thousand *paras*. There were several other Nejdis, partaking more or less of the same formation as the one above described. They carried no flesh, had very rough coats, and reminded me much of the Hungarian cavalry horse. The Nejdi, however, is higher than the Hungarian, but looks small from his fine proportions. The tallest horse I have seen of this breed was fifteen hands one inch; but they are generally two or three inches under this. In walking through the caravan encampment, about to leave Cairo for Mecca, we were admiring a finely formed horse, when his owner pointed at another, which he valued more highly. He was feeding out of a bag, so that the lower part of his head was not visible; but he was smaller than the other, and remarkably short and thick in all his proportions. He had what dog-amateurs call "a coarse stern," his tail being entirely out of place, and his hind-quarters cut off short like those of a camel. The Arab spoke much of his great speed, and said he was a Nejdi of the famous Hassan breed. He was surprised at our preferring the other. They were both chestnut.

The Dongola horse is black, with long white legs, and upright pasterns. He has a coarse Cleveland head, and, when out of condition, grows flat-sided and scanty in the loin. There is altogether a soft useless look about him. A certain French writer has stated that these horses are highly prized by the young gentlemen of Alexandria, who mount these long-legged nags for an hour or two in the morning, before they mount their long-legged stools; but as their judgment may possibly not have been matured upon the Hambledon Hills, it is not to be blindly adopted. It is said that these horses are very perfect in Dongola, but that they degenerate when exposed to a colder climate. It may easily be believed, that from such a cause a

horse will lose his condition, and, apparently, his substance; but that his bone should waste, that his legs should grow longer, or his ribs shorter, seems incredible. It is likely that those in the Pasha's stables were some of the best specimens to be found.

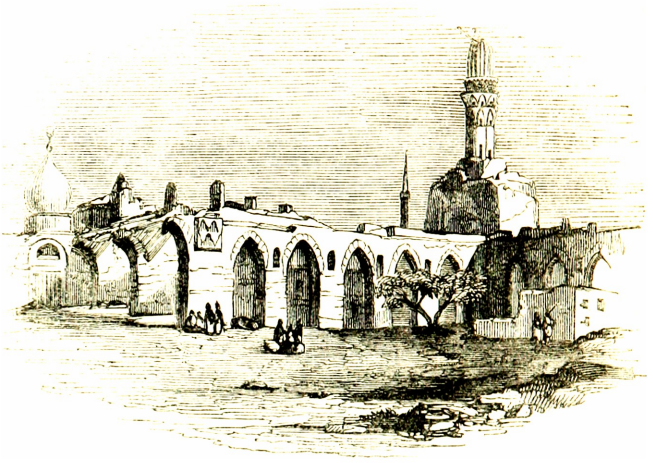
The method in use among the Arabs, both of the cultivated country and the desert, for securing their horses, whether in the stable, the field, or the camp, is highly injurious, each fore-leg being fastened to the corresponding one behind by a rope, so short that the former are drawn considerably under the body, both when the horse is feeding and when at rest. In the field, two other ropes, passing from his fore-legs at right angles with his body, are pegged down at some distance on either side, and thus he is left to feed as far as he can before him. In the stable, besides the short rope fettering his legs, the horse's head is tied by two ropes to the ceiling, and by two others to the earth, the ropes at right angles from his fore-legs being fastened either to posts or to the wall, while his hind-legs are tied either to the back wall, or to a strong rope, which passes along the ground below the horse for that purpose. There may appear to be reason for putting some of these restraints upon horses placed near together, without any partition to prevent their maiming each other; but it will scarcely be believed that I have seen a single horse, in a loose box, confined in the same manner; and this, not because he was vicious, but because it was customary! The practice of fastening the fore-legs, and thus continually forcing them back under the body, must confine the natural freedom of action which a horse ought to possess; and, as it is applied to colts when very young, it seems not impossible that it may even displace the shoulder from the natural position which it would otherwise take. This appears to me to be the most rational way of accounting for the fact, that the greater number of horses in Egypt have broken knees.

CHAPTER XX.

Visit to the Mosque of Flowers, to that of Sultan Hassan.—Festival of the Ashr.

Formerly, a Christian traveller discovered in a mosque would have been considered guilty of sacrilege, and compelled to abjure his religion or lose his life; and, even at the present day, Christians are rigidly prohibited the entry of all Mahommedan places of worship; so that, to obtain admission, they must adopt the disguise of a native. Having, accordingly, assumed the Turkish costume, and received from the governor an officer to accompany me, I visited the two most remarkable mosques of Cairo, the interior of which few travellers have beheld or described. The first I entered was the celebrated mosque of El Azhar, founded A. H. 358 (A. D. 968), during the reign of Ali, the grandson of Akhshid, three years before the commencement of the Fatimite dynasty. On arriving at the gateway, we doffed our slippers, and entered a marble-paved court, surrounded by an elegant colonnade, the entablature of which is adorned with arabesques of a bright red colour. Numbers of poor Mussulmans, maintained by the charity of the

foundation, were lying asleep on mats in various parts of the area; while others, in their immediate vicinity, were engaged in prayer. To avoid



Ancient Mosque near Bab-el-Nasr.

attracting the attention of the fanatical worshippers, we passed on rapidly, as if brought thither by devotion, and traversing the court, proceeded into the body of the mosque, where a numerous congregation was assembled. Contrary to the idea commonly prevailing in Europe, a large portion of the votaries consisted of ladies, who were walking to and fro without the slightest restraint, conversing with each other, and mingling freely among the men. The pulpit, constructed entirely of stone, adorned with slender pillars, and beautifully carved, greatly resembles the *suggesti* of catholic churches, and stands at the extremity of the building, directly opposite the entrance. Numerous rows of marble columns, about two feet in diameter, extend the whole length of the edifice, supporting the roof, and creating an idea of grandeur. The pavement, likewise, is of marble. But the height of the mosque does not correspond with the extent of the ground-plan; and this imperfection diminishes the effect which its forest of pillars and tasteful ornaments would otherwise produce.

Though originally erected for purposes of devotion, the mosques are often converted into caravanserais; where persons, having no other house, may sleep and eat, listen to the relations of the story-teller, or transact business. In the time of Van Egmont, it was said, that between five and six thousand persons received their daily subsistence from the mosque of El Azhar, while two thousand students and mendicants slept habitually within its walls. It remains, indeed, open all night, with the exception of the principal place of prayer, which is called the Muksoorah, being partitioned off from the rest of the building. In many other of the large mosques, particularly in the afternoon, persons are likewise seen lounging,

chatting together, eating, sleeping, and sometimes spinning or sewing, or engaged in some other simple craft; but, notwithstanding such practices, the Muslims very highly respect their sacred edifices.* Many blind paupers are supported at the mosque of El Azhar, and we were much affected by seeing some bent double by age, slowly walking through the avenues of columns, knowing from habit every turn and every passage, and looking like the patriarchs of the assembled multitude.† The individuals attached to the service of this foundation, and those who partook of its bounty, amounted once to forty thousand, though many of them lived in distant parts of the country.‡ Though less rich and flourishing than formerly, this establishment is still considerable, and contains several colleges, where the Ulemas lecture on the Koran and the laws. In other respects it resembles a caravanserai, divided into several quarters, appropriated to the students of different nations, who are supported by the revenues of the mosque. In going the round of these apartments, after passing successively among natives of different divisions of Egypt, we found ourselves in the company of people of Mecca and El Medina; then in the midst of Syrians; in another minute among Muslims of Central Africa; next amid Moggrebyns, or natives of Northern Africa, west of Egypt; then with European and Asiatic Turks; and quitting these, we were introduced to Persians, and Muslims of India: we may almost fancy ourselves transported through their respective countries.§ Each division is under the superintendence of a nazir, subordinate to the principal director. On every alternate day, three thousand eight hundred pounds of bread, and a quantity of oil for the lamps, are distributed; besides which, the students receive monthly a small stipend. The whole annual expenditure is estimated at six hundred and thirty thousand piastres; partly furnished by the government, and partly arising from the rent of houses, shops, and warehouses, bequeathed to the charity by pious individuals.|| For the convenience of the crowds who frequent the establishment, numerous entrances have been made on all sides. A person of rank or wealth, when going to this mosque, is generally accom-

* Lane, i., 97. † Mrs. Pool, p. 161. ‡ Van Egmont's Travels, vol. ii. p. 67.
§ Mrs. Pool, p. 162. || Mengin, Histoire de l'Egypte, t. ii., p. 327.

panied by a servant bearing a seggadeh, or small prayer-carpet, about the size of a hearth-rug, upon which he prays. During the noon-prayers of the congregation on Friday, the worshippers are very numerous, and, arranged in parallel rows, they sit upon the matting. Different services at other times are presented in the great portico of the Azhar. We observed many lecturers addressing their circles of attentive listeners, or reading to them commentaries on the Koran. In most cases these lecturers were leaning against a pillar; and I understand that in general each has his respective column, where his pupils regularly attend him, sitting in the form of a circle on the matted floor.*

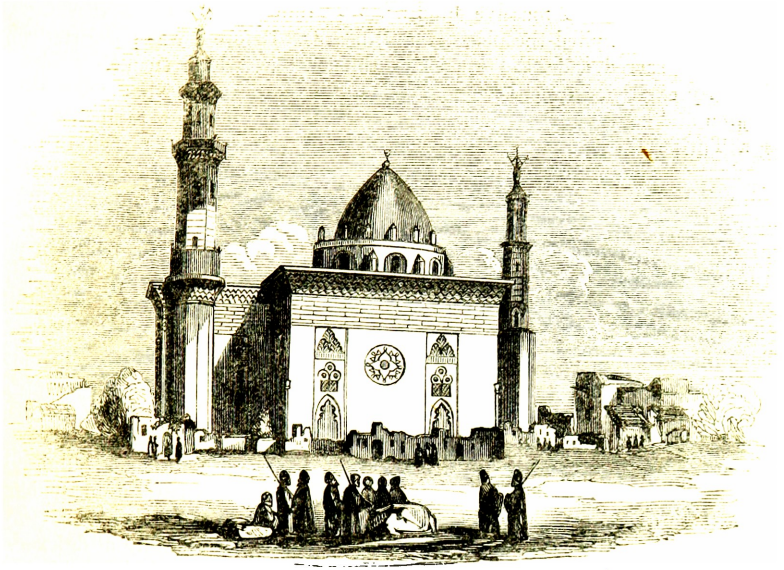
We next proceeded to the Mosque of Sultan Hassan, erected near the gate leading to the citadel. The history of the founder of this magnificent structure presents a striking example of the instability of Oriental despots. Succeeding his brother Hajji, murdered in A.H. 748, Hassan exercised the supreme authority during three years, when he was deprived of the sceptre by his brother, Al Salah; but this prince, ignorant of the art of reigning, being, in A.H. 755, dethroned and imprisoned, Hassan was a second time invested with the purple. Sedition, however, and dissensions between the Sultan and the chief of his Memlook army arising, a civil war ensued, and the prince, defeated by his slaves, was compelled to seek for safety in flight, and an obscurity from which he never again emerged. A recent traveller heard from the keeper of the Mosque an account somewhat different from the above: "Some red stains upon the pavement," he says, "produced from us a remark, and from the old attendant Turk a yarn. Sultan Hassan going into a far country, a treacherous vizier usurped his throne, and, upon the return of his lord and master, requested him to go back from whence he came, as he intended to relieve him of the cares of government. This request the Sultan was compelled to comply with. Years rolled on and still the sovereign power was in the hands of the rebellious vizier, when one day a rich and holy dervish appeared in the city of Delight, who, founding in his zeal a splendid mosque, prepared a sumptuous banquet within the building, to celebrate its perfection. The usurper, in all his stolen magnificence, attended. The repast was over, a costly revel was to succeed, and the most voluptuous beauties of the East to dance before the Sultan and his court. The host clapped his hands; but instead of the jingling of anklets, and the soft sounds of the cymbal and the lute, the clattering of arms was heard, the dervish threw off his sacred guise, the ungrateful vizier quailed before his dethroned lord, the Sultan Hassan, and in a moment he and his myrmidoms were cut to pieces. The blood-stained marble is a monument to treacherous ambition." †

The mosque, built in the form of a parallelogram, is exceedingly lofty, and surrounded by a projecting cornice and frieze, ornamented with arabesques; and its minarets, surpassing all others in height, are the first which the traveller beholds on approaching the city. Ascending a

* Mrs. Pool, pp. 163, 164.

† Borrer.

long flight of steps, and passing under a magnificent doorway, we entered the vestibule, and proceeded towards the sacred portion of the edifice; where, on stepping over a small railing, it was necessary to take off our



Mosque of Sultan Hassan.

babooshes, or red Turkish shoes. Here we beheld a spacious square court, paved with marble of various colours, fancifully arranged, with a beautiful octagonal marble fountain in the centre, surmounted by a cupola of airy proportions, resting on slender pillars. On each side of this area is an extremely lofty arched recess, judiciously introduced for the purpose of breaking up the uniformity of the enormous walls.

At the extremity of the court, and entirely open to it, is a large apartment, containing a marble tabernacle, surrounded by slender tapering columns, with a tasteful and finely-sculptured pulpit. Numerous Arabic sentences are written on the walls in letters of gold; and below, scratched with pen or pencil, are the names of various devotees; near which, in defiance of the prohibition of the Prophet, I observed an attempt at delineating the human figure. Massive doors of bronze, elegantly ornamented, close the entrance into the body of the edifice; into which, for motives of piety or prudence, my Turkish conductor was unwilling to introduce me. To behold this, however, having been my principal object, I addressed myself directly to the keeper of the mosque, at the risk of being discovered; and, somewhat to the surprise of the Turk, obtained instant permission to enter. Here, in the centre of the apartment, and surrounded by a neat

railing, stands the tomb of Sultan Hassan: though, according to Jemaleddin, he disappeared after his defeat by Yelbog, the Memlook, and was never afterwards heard of. The cenotaph, constructed in a simple style, with a short pillar at either end, is of pure marble, without name or monumental inscription. On the plain slab was placed an antique manuscript copy of the Koran, in heavy massive binding, resembling that of our ancestors, in which oak supplied the place of mill-board. Before I was permitted to touch this sacred relic, the keeper of the mosque, whose suspicions were evidently excited, explicitly demanded of my companion what were my religion and country. Without the slightest hesitation, he replied, "He is a Turk from Stambool;" upon which the Koran was placed in my hands. The manuscript, which was of fine parchment, and many centuries old, was written partly with ink, and partly in gold characters, and beautifully illuminated with stars of bright blue, purple, and gold. These tasteful ornaments, varying in size from that of a crown-piece to sixpence, studded the pages and the margin, but varied only in dimensions, the pattern being always the same. The title-page, slightly torn, exhibited a glittering mass of gilding, intermingled with arabesques in brilliant colours. Turning from the tomb to the apartment itself, I admired the simple beauty of the dome, springing from a square basis, adorned above, at each angle, with an ornament consisting of a cluster of octagonal bronze pipes of different lengths. Everything throughout the building displays a severe masculine taste, suggesting the idea of a fortress, rather than a religious edifice: and it is related that, in the sedition and revolution which burst forth during the decline of the Memlook Empire, this mosque, like the Temple of Jerusalem, was frequently converted into a place of defence. It would have been an endless task to visit all the places of worship in Cairo, though many of them are constructed in a beautiful style, and well deserve to be described. Others are remarkable for circumstances accidentally connected with them; and among these may be reckoned the mosque of the Hasaneyn.

On the day of Ashoora (tenth of Moharrem) the vicinity and interior of this structure present a curious spectacle, which one who witnessed it thus describes:—"The avenues were thronged with passengers, and in them I saw several groups of ghawazee; some dancing, and others sitting in a ring in the public thoroughfare, eating their dinners, and, with the exclamation of 'Bismillah!' inviting every well-dressed man who passed by to eat with them. One of them struggled hard with me to prevent my passing without giving them a present. The sight of these unveiled girls, some of them very handsome, and with their dress alluringly disposed to display to advantage their fine forms, was but ill calculated to prepare men who passed by them for witnessing religious ceremonies; but so it is, that, on the occasion of all the great religious festivals in Cairo, and at many other towns in Egypt, these female warrers against modesty, not always seductive I must confess, are sure to be seen. On my way to the mosque, I had occasion to rid myself of some of the small coins, which I had provided, to children. My next occasion for disbursing was on arriving before the mosque; when several water-carriers, of the class who

supplied passengers in the street, surrounded me: I gave two of them twenty fuldahs; for which each of them was to distribute the contents of the earthen vessel which he bore on his back to poor passengers, for the sake of 'Our Lord El-Hoseyn.'

"On entering the mosque I was much suprised at the scene which presented itself in the great hall, or portico. This, which is the principal part of the building, was crowded with visitors, mostly women, of the middle and lower orders, with many children; and there was a confusion of noises, like what may be heard in a large school-room where several hundred boys are engaged in play; there were children bawling and crying; men and women calling to each other; and, amid all this bustle, mothers and children were importuning every man of respectable appearance for the alms of the ashr. Seldom have I witnessed a scene more unlike that which the interior of a mosque generally presents; and in this instance I was the more surprised, as the Hasaneyn is the most sacred of all the mosques in Cairo. The mats, which are usually spread upon the pavement, had been removed; some pieces of old matting were put in their stead, leaving many parts of the floor bare; and these, and every part, were covered with dust and dirt, brought in by the feet of many shoeless persons: for on this occasion, as it is impossible to perform the ordinary prayers in the mosque, people enter without having made the usual ablution, and without repairing first to the tank to do this; though every person takes off his or her shoes, as at other times, on entering the mosque; many leaving them, as I did mine, with the door-keeper. Several parts of the floor were wetted; and though I avoided them, I had not been many minutes in the mosque before my feet were almost black, with the dirt upon which I had trodden, and with that from other persons' feet which had trodden upon mine. The heat, too, was very oppressive; like that of a vapour bath, but more heavy; though there is a very large square aperture in the roof, with a mulkuf of equal width over it, to introduce the northern breezes. The pulpit-stairs and the gallery were crowded with females, and in the assemblage below the women were far more numerous than the men. Why this should be the case I know not; unless it be because they are more superstitious, and have a greater respect for the day of Ashoora, and a greater desire to honour El-Hoseyn, by visiting his shrine on this day.

"It is commonly said, by the people of Cairo, that no man goes to the Hasaneyn on the day of Ashoora but for the sake of the women; that is, to be jostled among them; and this jostling he may indeed enjoy to the utmost of his desire, as I experienced in pressing forward to witness the principal ceremonies, which contribute, with the sanctity of the day, to attract such swarms of people. By the back-wall, to the right of the pulpit, were seated, in two rows, face to face, about fifty dervishes of various orders. They had not yet begun their performances, or zikrs in concert; but an old dervish, standing between the two rows, was going through a zikr alone; repeating the name of God (Allah), and bowing his head each time that he uttered the word, alternately to the right and left. In pushing forward to see him, I found myself in a situation rather odd in a country

where it is deemed improper for a man even to touch a female who is not his wife, or slave, or a near relation. I was so compressed in the midst of four women, that, for some minutes, I could not move in any direction; and pressed so hard against one of them, face to face, that, but for the veil, our cheeks had been almost in contact; from her panting, it seemed that the situation was not quite easy to her; though a smile, expressed at the same time by her large black eyes, showed that it was amusing; she could not, however, bear it long; for she soon cried out, 'My eye! do not squeeze me so violently.' Another of these dames called out to me, 'O Effendi! by thy head! push on to the front, and make way for me to follow thee.' With considerable difficulty I attained the desired place; but in getting thither, I had almost lost my sword and the hanging sleeves of my jacket: some person's dress had caught the guard of the sword, and had nearly drawn the blade from the scabbard before I could get hold of the handle. Like all around me, I was in a profuse perspiration."

"The dervishes I found to be of different nations, as well as of different orders. Some of them wore the ordinary turban and dress of Egypt, others the Turkish padded cap, and others again high caps, or turtoors, mostly of the sugar-loaf shape. One of them had a white cap of the form last mentioned, upon which were worked, in black letters, invocations to the first four Kalifehs, to El-Hasan, and El-Hoseyn, and to other eminent saints, founders of different orders of dervishes. Most of these devotees were Egyptians; but there were among them many Turks and Persians. I had not waited many minutes before they began their exercises. Several of them first drove back the surrounding crowd with sticks; but as no stick was raised at me, I did not retire so far as I ought to have done; and before I was aware of what the dervishes were about to engage in, forty of them, with extended arms, and joined hands, had formed a large ring, in which I found myself inclosed. For a moment I felt half inclined to remain where I was, and join in the zikr, bow, and repeat the name of God; but another moment's reflection on the absurdity of the performance, and the risk of my being discovered to be no dervish, decided me otherwise: so, parting the hands of two of the holy men, I passed outside the ring. The dervishes, who formed the large ring, which inclosed five of the marble columns of the portico, now commenced their zikr, exclaiming, over and over again, 'Allah!' and, at each exclamation, bowing the head and body, and taking a step to the right; so that the whole ring moved rapidly round. As soon as they commenced this exercise, another dervish, a Turk, of the order of Mowlawees, in the middle of the circle, began to whirl, using both his feet to effect this achievement, and extending his arms; the motion increased in velocity until his dress spread out like an umbrella. He continued whirling thus for about ten minutes; after which, he bowed to his superior, who stood within the circle; and then, without showing any signs of fatigue or giddiness, joined the dervishes in the great ring, who had now begun to ejaculate the name of God with increasing vehemence, and to jump to the right, instead of stepping. After the whirling, six dervishes, within the great ring, formed another smaller circle, each placing his arms upon the shoulders

of those next him; and thus disposed, they executed a revolution similar to that of the larger ring, save that it was much more rapid; repeating also the same exclamation of 'Allah!' but with a rapidity proportionably greater. This motion they maintained for about the same length of time that the whirling of the single dervish before had occupied; after which, the whole party sat down to rest. They rose again, in about a quarter of an hour, and performed the same exercise a second time. I saw nothing more in the great portico that was worthy of remark, excepting the faquirs, who, a bystander told me, were idiots dancing and repeating the name of God, and each beating a tambourine.

"I was desirous of visiting the shrine of El-Hoseyn on the anniversary of his death, and of seeing if any particular ceremonies were performed there on this occasion. With difficulty I pushed through the crowd in the great portico to the door of the saloon of the tomb; but there I found comparatively few persons collected. On my entering, one of the servants of the mosque conducted me to an unoccupied corner of the bronze screen which surrounds the monument over the place where the martyr's head is said to be buried, that I might there recite the Fathah. This duty performed, he dictated to me the following prayer, pausing after every two or three words for me to repeat them, which I affected to do; and another person, who stood on my left, saying 'Amen!' at the close of each part. 'O God, accept my visit, and perform my want, and cause me to attain my wish; for I come with desire and intent, and urge thee by the Seyídeh Zeyneb, and the Imam Esh-Shafee, and the Sultan Aboo Sood.' After this followed similar words in Turkish, which were added on the supposition that I was a Turk, and perhaps did not understand the former words in Arabic. This short supplication has been often dictated to me at the tombs of saints in Cairo on festival days. On the occasion above described, before I proceeded to make the usual circuit round the screen which incloses the monument, I gave to the person who dictated the prayer a small piece of money, and he in return presented me with four little balls of bread, each about the size of a hazel-nut. This was consecrated bread, made of very fine flour, at a saint's tomb, and brought hither to be given to the more respectable of the visitors. Many persons in Egypt keep one of these little balls in their pocket as a charm; others eat it, as a valuable remedy against any disease, or as a preventive of disease."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NILOMETER AND THE ISLAND OF RHODA.—VALLEY OF THE WANDERINGS.

FEW things in the neighbourhood of Cairo are better worth visiting than the Nilometer and the Island of Rhoda. The lovers of Scriptural antiquity will experience pleasure during the visit, from the tradition, that the prophet Moses, when set afloat on the Nile in the ark of bulrushes, was driven ashore by the wind or current on the southern extremity of this

beautiful isle; while others will taste all the delight excited by picturesque scenery, united with the most varied historical associations. To enjoy

The Island of Rhoda.

these beauties, we set out from Cairo early in the morning, mounted as usual on donkeys; and arriving at Masr-el-Atikeh, embarked in the common passage-boat on the river.

When we reached the opposite bank, we paused to look around us. It was a lovely scene. In fact, the bank of the river was studded with the picturesque draw-wells of the country, while the town of Old Cairo towered above. To the right and left the eye followed the windings of the Nile, bearing on its bosom butterfly-winged boats, and the picturesque latine sail; while high on the bank behind us waved the majestic trees of Rhoda gardens. We climbed the steps conducting to them: in a few months hence the steps will be under water, as the Nile at its height washes the very walls of this little paradise. It belongs to Ibrahim Pasha, whose harem opens into its flowery shades.

I cannot fancy anything more lovely than this charming spot, although I am told Shoobra surpasses it. But, at all events, this has the advantage, that its beauties are fresh from Nature's hand; and were it not for the well-kept walks and weedless flower-beds, that of man would be invisible.

The most prevalent shrub is the luxuriant myrtle, covered with its odoriferous white blossoms, and generally exceeding eight feet in height. The whole garden is intersected by hedges of this beautiful plant. On one side are magnificent avenues of acacias, in full bloom, leading to terraces overhanging the Nile, shaded by groves of weeping-willows. Then, following one of these narrow winding paths, cut through a plantation of olive-trees, you come to a silvery stream, meandering beneath flowering shrubs of every hue, from the graceful laburnum of the north to the blushing pomegranate of the south. Beyond this you find yourself under the shadow of an avenue of tall mulberry trees, which leads you to a sunny region, where the rose and the geranium flourish in wild luxuriance, only checked by the magnificent hedges of cactus that surround them, also in full blossom; and presenting, as a whole, the blended beauties of the western and eastern worlds.

But, as I have said, description is vain; it would require a pen dipped in rainbow hues to write it. Everywhere gaudy-coloured butterflies and

gauzy-winged dragon-flies were sipping and fluttering among the sweets that surrounded them, while myriads of birds chanted forth their orisons from the leafy branches above. Sometimes a hoopoe, with its glossy black and white plumage, started up close to our feet from a neighbouring thicket; then a lively little blue bunting flew out from some flower-shrub, and twittered around us almost within our grasp; immediately afterwards, a crested-wren, perhaps, would cross our path. Everything appeared replete with life and beauty in this favoured spot, and our senses of sight, smell, and hearing, were equally gratified.

In a short time I had collected an exquisite bouquet of geraniums, roses, pomegranates, and numerous other sweets, interspersed with myrtle. No over-curious and lynx-eyed gardener forbids one to partake and carry away a gleaning of those beauties so profusely scattered around. On the contrary, a young man, who was evidently entitled to do so by his office, came forward, when he saw us, and presented me with a nosegay, composed of the most choice plants of the garden. We had been wandering amongst a plantation of olive-trees, when suddenly the narrow path we were following opened upon the crystal stream I have before described, just at a point where a handsome stone bridge was thrown over it. The material it was composed of was almost hidden from view by a profusion of flowering creepers, while aloes, planted by the water's edge, were rearing their gigantic flower-stalks eleven and twelve feet in height above it, throwing the lemon perfume of their petals into the already scented air. We crossed this bridge, and found ourselves in a large open space, carpeted with turf, surrounded by a walk, and a grove of pomegranate trees in full bloom. In the centre of the lawn was a lofty flowering shrub, which I took at first for the laburnum, but on approaching nearer found I was mistaken, although the flower strongly resembles it; it is exactly the same colour, but each bunch of blossom is at least four or five times as long and full, and the seedpods, some of which we gathered, were a foot and a half in length. This open spot fronts a kiosk, or country-house, now building for the Pasha.

We travelled on, as the sun had become very hot, to the acacia grove on the other side, where we seated ourselves on one of the numerous benches which are to be found in every part of the gardens. Just as we were thinking of going home, we met some friends, who directed our attention to a curious grotto, which, as we had not seen it, we hurried back to visit. The grotto is entered from a marble terrace overlooking the stream, which is here widened into a large sheet of water surrounding three sides of the kiosk. It is composed entirely of shells and coral, brought from the Red Sea, very ingeniously inlaid. There are three compartments, the first of which is entered by a cavity barely large enough to admit a person when bent double; in the last is a sparkling fountain, sending the music of its waters through the cool retreat. Here Ibrahim Pasha delights to smoke his chibook, accompanied by a few chosen friends, and while away the monotony of a Mohammedan day. This grotto reminded me of the one I saw seven years ago in the garden of the Little Trianon at Versailles, where Marie-Antoinette, and the favourite ladies of her court, retired to chat and

sip their tea during the sultry evenings of summer, and forget the tedium of regal splendour.

I accompanied our friends into the kiosk. The Pasha has a great many of these small houses, perched about in the prettiest situations ; they are intended for him to pass a few hours in during the summer heat, and smoke his chibook, while he views the varied prospects beneath, and is refreshed by the cool breezes wafted through flowery regions. The present erection is very simple and unostentatious, the principal feature being the water, which surrounds it like a moat on three sides, and washes its walls. It is three stories high, and the view from the top is enchanting. I stood upon the little balcony of one of the windows, quite enchanted with the scene. Immediately below me lay the whole extent of the island, spread out with all its parterres and terraces, like a map of many colours, girded by the silvery river, whose course stretched on either side as far as the eye could reach. Cairo was behind me ; but immediately in front stood out the colossal Pyramids in bold relief, but the blue misty hue on their surface reminded me of the many miles which divided us. I could have looked and looked for ever ; but the carpenters, who were working at the window-frames, and pestering for bucksheesh, would not allow me to interrupt them any longer.*

At the southern extremity of the island the Pasha has erected powder-mills, near which is the tower of the Nilometer, or Mekyas, a marble pillar divided into cubits and inches, for ascertaining the rise of the river. It stands in a deep square basin ; and, in A. D. 847, the year of its erection, its base was on a level with the surface of the river, at low Nile. Formerly, as we learn from the Nubian geographer, an elegant cupola was erected over the cistern, ornamented with arabesques in gold, blue, and other colours : but this no longer exists. A square beam, passing from wall to wall, as represented in Pococke's engraving, rests on the top of the column, and is now, perhaps, necessary to keep it erect, but greatly detracts from the beauty of its appearance. We descend into a well by a flight of steps, once an ornament to the building, but at present neglected and covered with mud. The water, like that of the Khalish, having been long stagnant, was green and fetid ; and the whole place, like all the other buildings in this country, had an appearance of dilapidation and decay. It was on the site of the Nilometer that Moses, according to the tradition of the country, was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter in the ark of bulrushes.

Egypt, it will have been seen, is everywhere full of Scriptural traditions. Of these, one of the most remarkable is that which is connected with the Exodus of the Israelites, who are popularly believed to have marched south from the land of Goshen, skirted the Mokattam Mountains, traversed the present site of Cairo, and turning to the left near Toura, to have travelled towards the Red Sea through a wild gorge in the Arabian chain. Dr. Robinson, who has diligently considered the whole question of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, adduces many arguments † to show that they pursued a different route. This is not the proper place to indulge in

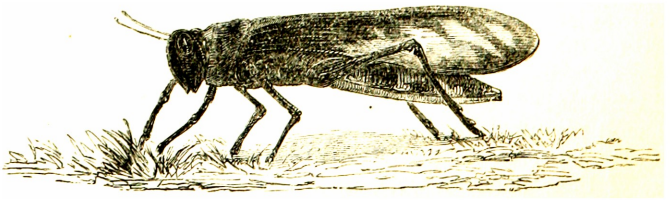
* Mrs. Griffith. † "Biblical Researches."

a controversy on the subject, but it may be observed, that although the Doctor's theory is not without probability, there may have been circumstances in their departure which made them select a difficult track for their retreat. For example, knowing that the strength of Pharaoh consisted greatly in chariots, they may have eschewed the broad level plain extending towards Suez, and have struck purposely into the mountains, to interpose as many obstacles as possible between the Egyptians and themselves. There is no analogy between the movements of a modern army and that of fugitives like the Israelites, who were escaping for their lives. In such circumstances, three days would suffice, even by the Valley of the Wanderings, to carry them to the shores of the Red Sea. As I said, however, I shall abstain from entering into anything like a discussion of this point, my object being rather to describe what exists and is believed in the country, than what may be invented by the learned to support any particular hypothesis.

In the Valley of the Wanderings, extending from the vicinity of Toura to the Red Sea, are found the remains of extensive forests, overthrown and converted into agate, which we were desirous of visiting. Several of the Franks of Cairo, who seldom venture beyond their threshold unattended by a host of guides, understanding our intention, prophesied we should all be murdered in this perilous adventure, unless protected by an escort of Mahazi Bedouins—the lords paramount of the whole desert lying between the latitudes of Cairo and Kosseir. Accustomed, however, to their credulity and exaggeration, which, at an earlier stage of our journey, might have deceived us, we slighted their prognostications, and proceeded on the excursion with our own daring Arab attendant and usual arms. Quitting the city by the gate of the citadel, and traversing the great Memlook cemetery, we turned off to the left, a little beyond Toura, and entered among the rocky hollows of the desert, where the ground is strewed with the fragments of crystal, and large beds of the *ostrea diluviana*. The mouth of the valley is of considerable breadth, and the hilly chain constituting its northern boundary abrupt and rugged, being intersected by numerous deep and rocky ravines, through which the gazelles descend at night into the plain. In all places frequented by these animals, we observe the same contrivances for destroying them—small semicircular breastworks, behind which the sportsmen lie in wait for their game.

Having advanced some distance into the valley, in many places divided by intervening ridges into several parallel channels, we arrived among the petrifactions, scattered over the ground in large blocks of various forms. The exterior of the stone exhibits the appearance and colour of wood; while the interior, resembling flint or agate, is often singularly variegated. In some specimens we observed the knots and roots of the trees twisted and interlaced; in others, a straight, fine grain; and in a third sort—by far the most plentiful—the loose, fibrous texture characteristic of palm-wood. Hitherto, however, though we had advanced several miles up the valley, none of those immense trees, spoken of at Cairo, presented themselves. We therefore continued in the same direction, until, in passing the entrance to a narrow opening, we discovered in the distance a small bright red hill,

which, viewed in contrast with the surrounding grey rocks, seemed to have been drenched with showers of blood. Though this is not the place where the petrifactions are usually sought, the extraordinary aspect of the eminence induced us to diverge from our course; and immediately, almost in the mouth of the gorge, we discovered enormous trees, bared of their branches, overthrown, and converted into stone. Several of the trunks measured three feet in diameter, and from forty to fifty-two feet in length; in some cases presenting the appearance of having been sawn into various blocks; in others, particularly on the slope of the hills, seeming to have been overthrown in their petrified state by floods or hurricanes, and shattered to fragments in their fall. It is moreover worthy of remark, that in all cases which came under my notice, the roots of the trees point towards the Red Sea, and their summits towards Egypt. Few of these larger petrifactions are palms, though we observed one specimen, three feet and a half in length, which displayed all the rough annular appearance of the date-tree, whose branches had been lopped off according to the present fashion. The greater number are a species of timber no longer known in Egypt. A petrified peg, or wedge, picked up by my companion, Dr. Hogg, contained two pieces of rusty iron nail. The tops of the hills, the beds of the torrents, the hollows, the glens, and ravines, are profusely covered with these petrifactions, which would seem in most instances to have been transmuted in an upright position, and afterwards cast down and broken. All this portion of the desert, therefore, must once have been fertile and covered with forests; though, in process of time, the vegetation has disappeared, while the soil, scorched and deprived of moisture by the sun, has lost the power of production. On arriving at the red hill, we found it to be a hemispherical eminence, covered with a thick coating of vermilion-tinted clay, which might, perhaps, be advantageously employed in the manufacture of porcelain. The old priest of Sais, who in the Timæus of Plato relates so many extraordinary things to Solon, alludes to a tradition attributing the devastation of these mountainous tracts to some marvellous change in the course of nature, and the too near approach of the sun. Some obscure notion of this kind the Greeks enveloped in the poetical fable of Phaëton. The priest further observes, that when the low lands were devastated by a deluge, the shepherds and herdsmen removed to the mountains, and were there saved from destruction; consequently, these chains could not have been wholly destitute of vegetation.



The Locust.

CHAPTER XXII.

ISTHMUS OF SUEZ.—SLAVE BAZAAR.

IN describing the desert road between Suez and Cairo, now monthly traversed by the overland mail, I shall make use of the pen of Sir William Cornwallis Harris. This distinguished traveller, whose account of Southern Abyssinia is now in everybody's hand, has, in a letter to me, not only sketched the route from the Red Sea to the capital of Egypt, but also given a rapid sketch of all he saw during his stay and on his passage down the Nile. Upon two or three points already treated he has touched lightly, but I would not omit anything of his lively and graphic narrative. I will only add, that it affords me much pleasure to find that on almost every question connected with Egypt, Sir William Harris's opinions coincide with my own.

" In Quarantine off the Isle of Wight.

" MY DEAR ST. JOHN,

" Aware of the deep interest you take in all matters connected with Abyssinia, and with my recent Embassy thither, I hasten to apprise you of my safe arrival in the ' Oriental,' with the various presents sent by the Christian King of Shoa to our Most Gracious Queen. With these I set out on my return from the African highlands in February last, and was accompanied through the Adel desert to Bombay by two natives of Shoa; the first who have ever crossed the ocean, or even visited the coast. They were deputed by his Majesty to view the glories of our Eastern possessions, and were fairly bewildered with what they saw. It would be amusing to hear the accounts they will carry to Sahela Selassie of ' the great salt water and the steam houses that walk over it,' of the cathedral, the arsenal, the dock-yard, and other wonders; but especially of the Mint, whence the gold and silver coins that he loves are, by some magic process, ' scattered over the floor like the drops of rain!'

" I tarried only three weeks in India, and my subsequent route through Egypt has brought me acquainted with the land on which you have written so ably. Being detained a month, I re-read your travels on the spot with increased pleasure and profit. Travellers have left nothing unsaid on the subject that I could say, more especially to you; and as even the record of my impressions would prove an oft-told tale, I shall restrict myself to the bare account of my onward progress.

" On my first arrival at Suez, those who, like myself, have viewed the overland communication as the connecting link with their native land, will be horrified, as I was, with the singular preparations making in the court-yard adjoining the agent's house, for the transmission across the Desert of the numerous boxes containing the mail. Hundreds of refractory camel-

owners flock together with their turbulent beasts of burthen, and the clamour and Babel-like confusion is presently at its climax. All are eagerly eyeing the pile of cases, but none venture to approach. Suddenly two or three janissaries, whose office it is to superintend the distribution, arise from their seats, cast aside their long pipes, and lay about with their ratans in the most indiscriminate fashion, without either favour or affection. A general rush ensues. Camels growl and their drivers curse. The packages are rudely lashed upon the saddles, and as the loading of each dromedary is completed, away he goes at a trot through the dusty suburbs, and is soon veiled from sight in the flat horizon. From the moment of starting, each party is left to his own devices, with a simple understanding that he is to make the best of his way to Cairo, and every letter of the thousands and tens of thousands thus consigned to the Desert, reaches its destination in from sixteen to twenty hours.

"Having arranged the transit of my own numerous bales, and seen them fairly through the gate of the town, we strolled towards the substantial caravanserai, or, more properly, *fortification*, erecting by the Pasha for the accommodation of pilgrims to Mecca; and were invited to inspect one of his Highness's new packet steamers, which was lying in the muddy creek. The native engineer on board, who spoke English with extraordinary fluency, and had profited well by a scientific education at Liverpool, had just returned from a voyage to Jidda with a cargo of true believers destined for the Holy City; and if he was guilty of a little exaggeration when detailing the number of knots completed during the hour, it was only reasonable that he should be vain of his craft, which had been both lengthened and widened under his own personal superintendence—her original dimensions having proved too small by a few inches every way, for the admission of the engines.

"The two-wheeled vans destined for our own conveyance were now ready, and having duly packed ourselves within them, the whips were cracked, and away bounded the unbroken steeds, kicking furiously, and evincing no sort of respect for the established high road from India, which is daily becoming more and more deeply worn by carriage-wheels. The "overland" communication, in its present improved form, has completely effaced the romance formerly attaching to the Desert of Suez. Within the distance of eighty-four miles are to be found no fewer than seven station-houses, where the Peninsular and Steam-Navigation Company have arranged to provide the traveller with every luxury, from the waters of the Nile to sparkling champagne; and there being relays of horses, the time actually passed within the vehicles need not exceed twelve hours. The centre station, however, affords the accommodation of excellent sleeping-apartments for those who may prefer resting by the way.

"I looked at the isthmus with very curious eyes, for, as you already know, I had been some years previously nominated to superintend the construction of surveys and plans for a canal across it, which was in contemplation during the period of Lord Clare's administration at Bombay. The Pasha's subsequent position interfered with my projected employment, but I had carefully studied the subject, and felt well pleased to find myself

at last on the spot. The navigation of the ancients was conducted through a series of trough-like depressions forming the *Lacus Amari* of Pliny, and thence to the Nile by certain wadys, which constitute a long valley, formerly overflowed, but now dry. Whatever may once have been the hydraulic capacity of this channel, there are at the present day many formidable obstacles opposed to the re-establishment of navigable communication, and still more to the construction of a direct canal between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Independently of the changes undergone in the features of the tract to be cut through, it is evident that the Red Sea, with its winds, rocks, and currents, continues to offer the same impediments to sailing vessels, those of heavy burthen especially, that it did in the days when ploughed by the fleets of Solomon, in quest of the myrrh and frankincense of the Somauli Coast. And setting aside the vast expense that would be involved by the construction of a large commercial canal, with safe and efficient sea-ports, a serious objection is presented in the length of time that must be required to complete so gigantic an undertaking. Our relations with the East require that the communication should be perfected at once, and this can only be accomplished by a railroad between Suez and Cairo.

"I have heard all manner of absurd and childish objections urged to this scheme, but when the difficulties to be overcome, and the comparatively small expense to be incurred, are contrasted with the splendid results to be obtained, it seems amazing that it should be only still a project. It was first contemplated by the shrewd Viceroy of Egypt, about ten years ago, but relinquished after a considerable portion of the iron work had actually been prepared. The same jealousy that is arrayed against our influence on both coasts of the Red Sea, is equally opposed to a Suez railroad, which presents such important commercial advantages, and comes so completely within the limits of immediate application. In a scheme which I have seen for a canal, England is the only nation of Europe not included in the enumeration of those who are to be participators in the great commercial advantages of a navigable highway! The vanity of the Pasha, however, still prompts him to leave behind a monument of his government laid in iron not less durably than the laboured mausoleums of the Pharaohs; and I therefore trust that the day is not far distant when we are to see the barefooted pilgrim to the shrine at El Medina, not only taking steam for Jidda, but whirling across the desert in the train of a locomotive engine!

"With the exception of occasional sand hillocks, which intersect the landscape, the isthmus is remarkably level and open, and the general character of the soil is a hard compact gravel, overstrewed with pebbles, and nearly destitute of vegetation; but in spite of the absence also of water, this arid and forbidding tract affords an asylum to the 'desert-loving gazelle.' Egypt is always overflowing with *foreigners*, and we met several grotesque parties, in straw hats, plodding steadily towards Mount Sinai, on the back of the dromedary, with the bleached bones of which animal the roadside is abundantly garnished. For ourselves, we neither broke down, were overset, nor thrown in the path of adventures, and, after the usual baiting

and changes of team, arrived all at once within sight of the pyramids, and minarets, and palm-groves, of Grand Cairo.

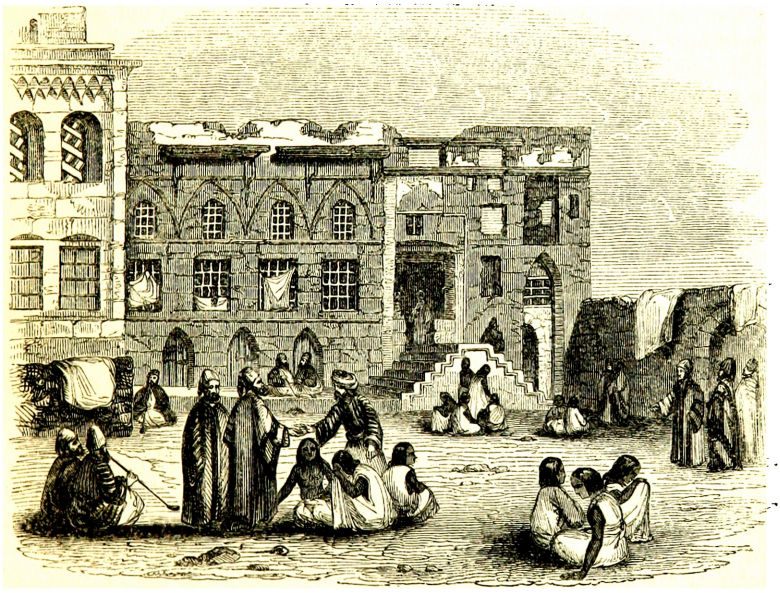
"By what a whirl of ideas was my fancy hurried round, as I indulged in a reverie of the past, with one foot resting on the barren desert, and the other on the alluvial borders, annually refreshed by the overflowing of old father Nile. His troubled waters, loaded with the highland soil I had so recently trodden, were already rising, and I viewed them with an interest scarcely to be described. No one who has read of Egypt can fail to be prepared for a sudden transition from all that is herbless and lifeless, to the most verdant and luxuriant vegetation; but the strange division of the landscape, into parallel belts, coloured green and yellow, must be seen to be thoroughly comprehended. And then such a crowd of objects brought together to excite and employ the imagination. I declare I felt in a sort of fairy dream, as the vehicle passed, by a single revolution of the wheels, from the boundary of solitude, sterility, and silence, into the fertile valley, whence the busy hum of thousands arose from a populous city, the centre of the most attractive scenes of Oriental history.

"I was not much grieved to find myself unavoidably detained in Egypt an entire month, by the inability to convey to Alexandria, in time to catch the 'Great Liverpool,' the animate portion of the present with which I am charged for her Britannic Majesty. This is a beautiful black mule, designed for the Prince of Wales. 'Superior to all'—for so she is entitled—was the flower of the royal stud in Shoa, and contrived to excite such admiration in Cairo, that there was always a crowd collected round her stable door; and I received from more than one portly Bey the offer of pieces of gold in purchase, very greatly in excess of the mule price-current. After bringing her ladyship in safety through a country where everybody was anxious to steal her, and neither forage nor water could be obtained in over-abundance, she was taken care of by Captain Haines, the political authority at Aden, in order that I might resume my charge on my way through again from Bombay. Like the Abyssins, the poor thing is no sailor; and the three thousand miles which she was thus spared over the salt water, would sadly have impaired her present sleek and glossy condition.

"My sojourn in the land of Egypt afforded me the leisure I desired to amble on donkey-back through the busy streets, those hot-beds of plague, and to visit all objects of interest or curiosity in the environs of the metropolis. I was dragged up the Pyramids, and shoved down an inclined plane into their interior; and afterwards left to mourn over the modern hieroglyphics, in red and yellow paint, with which these venerable piles have been disfigured since the discovery of the Rosetta stone. I gazed and marvelled at the placid Sphinx, dived into the sand-choked necropolis, of which she is the presiding genius, and saw a dozen of mummies exhumed, unpacked, and pulled to pieces. I peeped into Joseph's Well, and clambered to the summit of the tallest minaret that marks the slumbers of the Caliphs. I possessed myself of a fragment of the hoary sycamore that sheltered Mary on her flight from Palestine, and penetrated into the sacred recesses of the humble church that afforded an asylum to the infant Jesus. In the garden at Matareah I plucked a leaf from a scion of the original Balm of Gilead,

brought to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba, and leaned against the proud obelisk at Heliopolis, which has laughed at three thousand winters, and is all that remains of the city where Herodotus studied. I inspected in turn all the ancient relics and all the modern embellishments of Cairo. I gazed from the tower whence its ruler superintended the massacre of the Mamelukes; and from all the high places looked forth over the 'Father of Waters,' and the surging billows of the Libyan Desert.

"The mosque, in progress of erection by the Pasha near the ruins of Saladin's palace, is the only building new to you, and it promises, should it ever attain completion, to be one of the most splendid edifices ever dedicated to Allah. I conclude that this pious work is intended to obliterate the adjacent stains of Mameluke blood; and Mahomed Ali had even resolved to dismantle the nearest of the Pyramids in order to obtain choicer materials for its construction; but he was fortunately deterred by the fear of what would be thought in Europe of such an outrage. The anxiety entertained by his Highness to stand well in the estimation of the civilised world, doubtless moved him to the imposition of a duty on the slave-trade, which in a very short space of time has almost caused its extinction at Cairo. I visited the market-place where the traffic in human flesh was lately flourishing, and send you a sketch, which will not fail to recall to



Slave-market at Cairo.

your recollection the old walls by which the square is hemmed in. But, thanks to the tax aforesaid, business is now stagnant. The cells contained only a few swarthy Nubians; four or five 'red Abyssinians,' natives of

Gurágué, who were decked out in all manner of finery to attract purchasers; and one Galla maid, who hid her pretty face, and laughed archly between her dark fingers, when unexpectedly saluted in her native tongue.

"Dr. Roth, who was employed with me in Abyssinia, had accompanied me thus far on his return to Germany; and, during a previous residence in Egypt, he had made himself so thoroughly conversant with Cairo and its environs, that I have reason to deem myself most fortunate in the possession of such a guide. It is impossible, indeed, to eulogise too highly my most agreeable companion, who is learned far beyond his years, and from his extraordinary energy and application rendered me infinite service in Shoa. He is quite a Humboldt, devoted to the cause of science, and, besides making a surprising collection in every department of Natural History, which I am now bringing home, was never happy unless when turning his versatile talents to useful account. We were to part at last, and I never felt melancholy with better reason than when his departure for Munich left me to resume my journey alone.

"I could not help complaining to the Doctor of the merciless plunder to which the ruins in Upper Egypt are being subjected, with the consent of the Pasha; but was consoled with the philosophical assurance, that the time for sacking them had fully arrived. 'Unless this be sanctioned as a national undertaking,' he insisted, 'many inestimable relics must be lost to the world, since they will inevitably be dispersed, and find their way singly into the hands of those who are incapable of appreciating them.' This devotion to science reminds me of an anecdote that diverted me excessively, which is told of a visitor who came to Egypt in pursuit of objects of Natural History. Whilst at Cairo, he cast a longing eye on the shaggy old lions that lodged in the Pasha's menagerie, and mentally resolved to add the stuffed spoils of one of their number to his museum. Application was accordingly preferred to his Highness, who, in ignorance of the plot conceived against the life of the animal, liberally passed a firman under the great seal authorising the removal of the finest. Transferred to a suitable cage, the unsuspecting victim to dissection was wheeled away in triumph, and great must have been his surprise, when, a few days afterwards, on thrusting his head confidingly under the raised portcullis, he found his neck entangled in a running noose of stout cord, the ends of which were violently hauled in opposite directions between the bars. Thus taken in the toils, resistance was vain; and, in spite of much violent opposition, the strangled lion was soon laid on the dissecting-table. Mahomed Ali looked somewhat disconcerted when he heard of the execution, but became better reconciled on learning that the *post-mortem* examination had revealed an affection of the liver and other dangerous internal maladies, which, in the course of a few days, must have proved not less fatal than a halter.

"You are aware, that in the present degenerate days the Patriarch of Alexandria resides at Grand Cairo, and retains little more than his pompous title. One of my first cares was to obtain an interview with his Holiness; and the Rev. Dr. Leider having readily undertaken to introduce Dr. Roth and myself, we threaded our way through the intricacies of the Coptic quarter, set apart for the occupation of 'Christian dogs.' Potros, the 108th

successor to St. Mark the Evangelist, ascended the patriarchal chair in 1803, and is now well stricken in years. We found the venerable man basking in Oriental state, within his humble divan, surrounded by the dignity of coffee and pipes, which were immediately handed round to his visitors; and the conversation turning at the same moment to the subject of my recent correspondence with the Archbishop of Gondar, I took occasion to comment on the fact, that, in Abyssinia, these Eastern luxuries are denounced as Mahommedan abominations by the juvenile prelate, who is, nevertheless, an appointment of his own, and indebted for a superior education to Dr. Leider. 'He ordains a thousand priests in a single day,' I added, 'and is in the enjoyment of princely revenues; but although his ghostly influence more than his temporal power secures for him the homage of every Christian potentate throughout his extensive see, he can only maintain this spiritual despotism by thus subscribing to the prejudices and fanaticism of the bigoted priesthood, who hold all classes in chains.' A silence of some minutes ensued, to allow the representative of St. Mark time to turn the matter over in his mind; and, after a deep-drawn pull at his *chebook*, he was thus delivered of the result of his rumination: 'Aye, but then you see Abba Salama has to deal in Abyssinia with a very ignorant set of people.' Now, this fact is not to be disputed; but can it be wondered at, when we reflect, that, until lately, the Primate of Æthiopia was selected at random from among the monks of the convent of St. Anthony, one of whom was torn from his austere cell, as each vacancy occurred, and, much against his will, carried into exile, to be placed on an episcopal throne!

"Having seen everything in Cairo, I resolved to proceed leisurely down the Nile, on my way to Alexandria, and took boat accordingly from Boulac, having little idea, however, that five entire days and nights were to be passed on the river. This very snail-like progress arose partly from adverse winds, but principally from an insuperable aversion displayed by my laziest of all lazy crews to the exercise of their brawny arms. Ever and anon they dabbled their oars in the water to a lively boat chorus, but our impetus was little accelerated, and, as the month drew towards a close, I began to be very apprehensive of losing my passage, insomuch that I was glad to offer a premium for increased exertion. Whilst still some hours distant from the Mahmoudyeh canal, I was aroused in the middle of the calm night by the distant labouring of paddle wheels, and thrusting my head out of the cabin window, had the mortification to perceive a steamer flying up the river like a shuttlecock, having on board, as I conjectured, the English mails brought by the 'Oriental' to Alexandria. Having watched her red glare till she was out of sight, I retired to bed, congratulating myself that at all events the passengers expected from Suez were still behind me; but scarcely had I closed my eyes on this reflection, when I was again aroused by the booming of paddle-wheels from the opposite direction, and was dismayed to perceive a second water-witch smoking, and steaming, and hissing as she rushed down with the rapidity of lightning. Never before had I been in a position to feel out of humour with the nautical steam-engine. The whole business seemed like a nightmare; but it was not until my

arrival at Atfih the next afternoon that my conviction of being too late was dissipated by the intelligence that the first cause of alarm was an express with despatches from the Pasha; and the other, the Steam Navigation Company's boat on her way down to await the expected passengers from England.

"My progress through the Mahmoudyeh canal was scarcely more rapid than that down the Nile, for owing to the scanty depth of water, the boat was oftener aground than afloat. During the first night, and the forenoon of the second day, we lay locked among a fleet of heavy barges, which, like ourselves, had stuck fast in the mud; and their philosophical crews, quite ignorant of the value of time, sate smoking on deck as if they felt well content to pass the residue of their sublunary existence in that precise position. The janissaries, with whom I had been furnished at Atfih, were not less comatose, but my entreaties and remonstrances at length aroused them from their lethargy. Tucking up their loose trousers, they waded on shore, and with the aid of their canes had soon driven together a flock of *fellahs*, who happened to be passing on their own business. A tow rope was placed in their hands, with orders to run away with it; and whilst one janissary urged them to proper exertion by the most convincing arguments, the second flew from one impeding boat to another, and banged everybody who was bold enough to come in his way. A poor woman who was rigourously assailed, let her infant drop into the river, and then screamed aloud. The stick rattled upon the shoulders of one of the crew, who sprang over the side, and rescuing the little brat, restored it to the arms of its mother, with a mouth crammed full of Nile mud. One obstacle after another now gave way before the ratan. We were hauled into deep water, and were no sooner in full sail, than a long string of donkeys passed up the bank, laden with square boxes, on which the words 'Postmaster,' and 'Secretary to the Government, Bombay,' were sufficiently conspicuous. The Oriental had arrived, and the covered green launch of the Transit Company, towed rapidly by horses, passed presently afterwards, its deck and latticed cabin crowded with passengers from England.

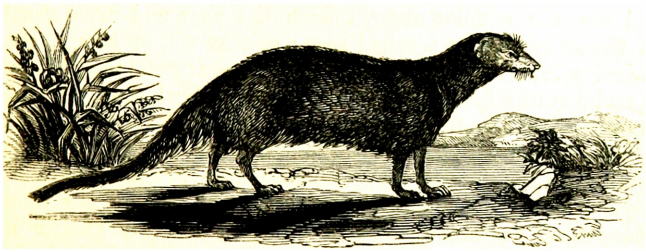
"One needs not many hours to visit Pompey's pillar, Cleopatra's needle, and the few other lions of Alexandria, but I had made up my mind not to depart out of Egypt until I should have been presented to its enlightened Viceroy, without seeing whom I could be said to have seen nothing. My obliging friend, Mr. Galloway, who deservedly holds a high place in the opinion of his Highness, at once undertook to obtain an audience for me, and after a few minutes' conversation with his Excellency Boghos Bey, the minister, we were ushered into the presence of Mahomed Ali, at a country seat, where he reclined upon an ottoman, in the cool recesses of an arbour. He received me with great courtesy, but was for some minutes totally absorbed in a voluminous Turkish manuscript, which was in course of perusal aloud by the dragoman, and at every fourth line, at least, embodied the word '*Napoleon.*' It is matter of notoriety, that the having come upon the world's stage in the same year as the Emperor, forms one of the peculiar vanities of the Pasha. I am unfortunately not prepared to throw any further light upon the contents of the document

under review, but as soon as he had duly digested them, I underwent a severe cross-examination on the subject of Abyssinia, the country that contains the sources of the stream to which his own dominions are indebted for their fertility, and the country which he would fain have claimed to append to those dominions, had not Lord Palmerston undertaken to expound clearly to his Highness how in this he laboured under a misconception. 'And you are now the bearer of tokens of goodwill to Queen Victoria?' concluded the Pasha, when I had fully satisfied his curiosity upon every point. 'Well, I cannot but compliment you upon your success with such a miser as I know the King of Æthiopia to be. Desiring to establish a better understanding with his people, and to open up commercial intercourse with the interior of Africa, I sent him all manner of fine things, and no bounds were set upon his delight; but when he came to dismiss my messenger he entrusted him with the sum of *ten dollars* as a return present, under the strictest injunctions to place the money in no other hands but those of Mahomed Ali!'

"With this anecdote of Abyssinian munificence, which I was happy to be able to trace to the puppet Emperor of Gondar, instead of to the ruler of Shoa, I must close my overland chapter. We made a good passage, and have still to perform sixty hours of quarantine ere permission can be accorded to mix with the world; but so soon as the days of our purification are accomplished, I shall hope to shake hands with you in London.

"Meanwhile, and ever, believe me most sincerely yours,

"W. C. HARRIS."



The Ichneumon.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Dancing Girls of Egypt.

Among the most interesting and remarkable spectacles in the modern capital of Egypt, are, or were lately at least, the performances of the Ghawazee,* of which many travellers have made mention, without, however, bestowing on the accomplished actresses all the praises which they appear to deserve. In reality, what is termed the "Dance of the Ghawazee," is the opera of the Orientals. All ranks, and both sexes, young and old, delight in the exhibition; and the ladies of the harem, instructed in the art by the Ghawazee themselves, perform in their own apartments for the amusement of their families. Even the wives and daughters of Europeans, who have long resided in the country, contract a partiality for this dance, and are no more ashamed to entertain their friends by the lascivious movements which it requires, than they are in Europe to waltz or execute the polka. On my arrival at Cairo, therefore, one of my first inquiries was concerning the dancing girls, who, I was told, lived apart from the profane vulgar, in the little rural village of Sha'arah—the Eleusis of modern Egypt—where the mysteries of Athor, the Mother of the Universe, were until lately celebrated by those youthful priestesses. Traversing nearly the whole of the city, we issued forth into the fields, through one of the most ruinous and unfrequented suburbs; and, in about half an hour,

"Facilis descensus Averni."

arrived at the village, which consists of a small collection of mud huts, huddled together without order, though less poor and more cleanly than any of the other villages we had seen; so that sin, in Egypt, cannot be reproached with the gorgeousness of its appearance, the Mahommedan saints and hermits being, in general, better lodged than the Ghawazee. On our arrival, a number of the dancers, many of them in very elegant attire, and adorned with a profusion of ornaments, came forth to meet and welcome us. They were all young—none, perhaps, exceeding twenty; and the majority between ten and sixteen years old. Some few would have been considered handsome, even in London; but the greater number, though fairer than the Caireen women usually are, had little beside their youth, and the alluring arts of their profession, to recommend them. When they were told that we desired to witness their performances, they proceeded to conduct us to the coffee-house, where the greater part of their time was apparently consumed in sipping coffee, singing, and that sort of piquant conversation which becomes their calling.

In the great saloon there were, perhaps, a hundred dancing girls assembled, all intent on the enjoyment of the moment, pupils of that sage school which motto is, "Carpe diem, quam minime credula postero." Not being

* Ghazeeyeh, *sing.*, a dancing girl: ghawazee, *plural.*

habituated to wine, coffee appeared to produce in them the same excitement and petulant gaiety to which champagne or burgundy sometimes gives birth among European women; and having no motives for concealment, they expressed the subject of their meditations with a cynical intrepidity worthy of a Lais or a Phryne. Two or three—the handsomest of all—were elegantly, or rather sumptuously dressed, in short embroidered jackets, fitting close, and showing the whole contour of the form; with long loose trousers of half-transparent silk, a bright-coloured shawl round the waist, and small graceful turbans of muslin and gold; their hair, which escaped in long black tresses from beneath the head-dress, was ornamented with strings of gold coins, strung like pearls, which, in some cases, depended in barbaric profusion over the forehead. Considerably the greater number were below the middle size, like the generality of their countrywomen, with clear brown complexions, oval face, fine teeth, and beautiful large dark eyes. Their dress, when not purposely discomposed, is by no means indecent; but, proud of the native grace of their forms, they seem daringly heedless of appearances, and continued, with affected negligence, to display in succession every hidden charm which nature had bestowed upon them. Not having as yet stepped beyond the threshold of youth, their bosoms were exceedingly beautiful, and their limbs exquisitely round and tapering. Though evidently disposed to exhibit all their arts of allurement, and overflowing with animal spirits, there was a quiet, easy voluptuousness about their manner, inimical to extravagant gaiety. They sang, they smoked, they sipped coffee, or conversed in soft tones with each other, indulging, from time to time, in petulant movements and speaking glances, which revealed the colour of their thoughts. Shakspeare, in his off-hand portrait of Cressida, a thorough member of this sisterhood, has given an excellent idea of their bearing and appearance:—

> "There 's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip:
> Nay, her foot speaks: her wanton spirit looks out
> At every joint and motion of her body."

The principal Ghazeeyeh now prepared to dance. She was a fine Arab girl in the flower of her age—an Oriental would have thought her beautiful—with a form resembling that of the Venus Kallipyga. Her ordinary dress, perhaps regarded as too prudish, was exchanged for a light and more tantalising costume, which, for exhibiting every beauty and contour of the figure, undoubtedly equalled the Coan robes, celebrated by Horace, or those transparent Amorginian garments which Lysistrata, in Aristophanes, counsels the Athenian ladies to assume, for the laudable purpose of putting an end to the Peleponnesian war. The whole business of the toilet was performed in public; and when her dress had been arranged so as to expose nearly the whole front of the person, she fastened round her waist a broad variegated belt, as thick as a horse's girth, without the support of which many of the postures required by the nature of the dance would be impossible. Throwing off her slippers, she then commenced the pantomime, her movements being accompanied by the music of the Egyptian pipe and drum, the songs of two or three of her companions, and the wanton sounds of the castanets. Many travellers affect to have been much disgusted by the

performances of the Ghazeeyeh, and perhaps when the dancers are ugly, the exhibition may have but few charms; but, in general, it is not beheld without pleasure, and I fear that a company of accomplished Ghazeeyeh, engaged by an opera manager, would draw crowded houses in Paris or London. The dance, which is κατ' εξοχην mimetic, represents a tale of love—at least, as love is understood in the East. Laying the scene in the desert, the fair one first appears as if standing, in the twilight, at the door of her tent, expecting her lover. Pensive, restless, tortured by delay, by suspicion, by jealousy, she casts a wistful glance over the waste, on which the shadows of evening are gathering, but beholds not her beloved, hears not the resounding hoofs of his steed; while the rising moon, wont to light him to her impatient arms, mingles its light with that of the retreating day, and rapidly acquires the ascendancy. In a reproachful, despondent tone, which gradually becomes impassioned, as memory places before her fancy the picture of past delights, she has recourse to the aid of song, in order the more completely to depict her feelings. The words, in the Arabic, are imbued with all the ardour which consumes her soul; but in the following imitation, or rather paraphrase, much, I fear, of the erotic fire is lost:—

SONG OF THE GHAZEEYEH.

Ya leli, ya lel;—Allah, ya lel.

"The night, the night, oh heaven! the night
Which brings thee, Hassan, to my arms!
When those dear eyes, so mild, so bright,
Bewitch me with their magic charms.

"The moon is up—each bush, each grove,
Is vocal with the night-bird's song;
Therefore, oh, wherefore, then, my love!
Tarries thy bounding steed so long?

"Some dark-brown tent;—some rival fair,
With ruddy lip, and flashing eye,
Hath cast around thy heart a snare—
While here alone I weep and sigh.

"She hears thy dear, deluding voice,
Flowing like some melodious river;
And deems the moment's fickle choice
Will charm thy wayward heart for ever!

"Ah, no!—the wronged, the loved one, comes!
I see him bounding o'er the plain.
Allah! where'er my Hassan roams,
I ne'er will doubt his love again."

The lovers being now together, the pantomime proceeds. At first, notwithstanding the earnestness with which she desired his presence, the damsel behaves coyly and bashfully; repels his advances with becoming decorum; plays the coquette; retires while he pursues—

"Fugit ad salices, at se cupit ante videri;"

but all the while betrays, by looks of complacency, and the humid sparkling of the eyes, that her feet and heart are running different ways. By degrees the dance assumes a more voluptuous character. The imagination of the bayadère, wrought upon by the comedy which she performs, kindles to

flame; her whole form is agitated by passion; her eyes close, her head drops backward, her arms are pressed against her bosom; while the music and the song—for the whole is accompanied by words—exhibit the same characteristics, and carry forward your ideas to the same goal. Lady Montague, who witnessed the exhibition in the harem, has ably and forcibly described the dance and its effects upon the imagination: but many other exhibitions—comedies, operas, farces, waltzes—are open to the same objections, and yet are tolerated, though the only difference seems to be, that the latter are the *irritamenta cupidinum* of civilised nations, the former of barbarians. Vice, however, in whatever climate it is found, sooner or later conducts its votaries to the bitter waters of repentance. Even the pantomime of the Ghawazee has this moral; for, the paroxysm of passion over, we observe the fallen fair one a prey to the stings of remorse; melancholy, dejected, humiliated, a fugitive from her home, recalling, amidst the hollow enjoyments of sin, the pure delights of her days of innocence, when her soul was untainted, and her person the object of an honourable love. One of their songs, which I have endeavoured to imitate, expresses, with graphic energy, the force and poignancy of their feelings:—

"My heart is in the desert vale, with Ahmed, far away,
Where rush the streamlets down the rocks, where Arab maidens gay
Revel, all free and innocent; nor waste one thought on her
Who left, long years ago, that vale, in pleasure's paths to err.

"Thither I wander in my dreams, and seem once more to stand,
All fair and guiltless, by my love, upon the golden sand;
While moonlight falls, in silver streams, around each rock and tree—
Likening to Paradise a scene, I never more must see.

"There, Ahmed with his desert bride, his loved one crowding near,
Laments no more his Leila's fate—he drops for me no tear:
Though once—be still, my bursting heart!—though once he seemed to prize
The perfume of my panting breath, the lightning of these eyes!

"Bring music—bring the syren bowl! let wine and minstrelsy
Drown these home-wandering thoughts, and teach my soul to taste of glee!
Then bid my Ali, full of love, hush all my care to rest,
With his arm around my yielding waist, and his head upon my breast."

All the nations of the East have, from the remotest ages, delighted in this species of exhibition, which from them passed into Greece and Rome, where it furnished the poets with an agreeable theme for satire. Horace, whose Divus Augustus had doubtless helped to introduce it, laments that the young ladies had acquired a taste for the Oriental style of dancing, which was evidently popular at Rome.

And Juvenal, who had travelled in Egypt, at a later period, makes mention of the Roman dancing-girls.

The Bayadères, or Nautch-girls of Hindostan, know no other kind of dance; and from paintings preserved in the grottoes of Eilithyias, and in the tombs of Thebes, we find that the ancient Egyptians had likewise their Ghawazee, who were employed in their domestic entertainments to heighten the effect of the song and the bowl by their voluptuous movements. At the time of which I am speaking, the ladies who practise these arts, were divided into three or four classes, according to their

beauty, and payed annually a tax to the Pasha, who, like his most Christian Majesty, farmed out the vices of his subjects. They were placed under the superintendence of the Pezawink Bashi; and when a party was sent for to perform in the evening at any private house, they were first required to repair to their chief, give in their names, and pay a large extra sum.

This honourable personage, after a lengthened delinquency, was at last convicted of the most nefarious practices, among which was that of inserting, in the list of these women, the names of several respectable ladies, the wives or daughters of his superiors. His punishment quickly followed, and was severe; but I forget in what it consisted: probably he was thrown into the Nile. The music which accompanies the dance, cannot, it must be acknowledged, challenge much commendation; but the Orientals generally appear to be exceedingly deficient in musical taste and science, and, like many persons in Europe, prefer noise and the clamour of numerous instruments to the concord of harmonious sounds. But the singers are chiefly women, and the female voice, however untutored, has always perhaps the power to cast a spell over the judgment, more particularly when impassioned gestures, melting looks, and a certain dithyrambic enthusiasm, transport the singer beyond herself, and render her like the Mænades or Bacchantes of old, unmindful of everything, but the ideas and desires which possess her soul, and of which every corporeal movement is an external manifestation. And this is not so much art as nature; she becomes what she would seem, *fœmina simplex*—uncurbed by that restraint, and moral discipline, and religious principle, which, in Christian countries, more especially in England, subdue and purify the passions, and elevate woman into the most chaste and perfect of created things.

Dancing Girl.

About fifteen years ago the Egyptian government came down upon the whole body of the operatic profession with a sweeping measure of reform. It issued an order one fine morning that all women known and licensed as professional dancers, singers, &c., who were to be found in Cairo or its

vicinity, should be seized forthwith and transported to Upper Egypt. On arriving there they were disposed of in marriage among the soldiery; from which auspicious union doubtless some new heroic race is destined to arise. We take the following account from a German traveller who visited Cairo in 1841. (Hackländer, ii., 239.)

It was a great disappointment to us that we could not witness any of those dances of which we had heard so much. That many of the performers still lived secretly in Cairo, was known to everybody; but the police kept such a sharp watch upon them that it was no easy thing to get them to dance, particularly before Christians. A German, however, whose acquaintance we happened to make, and who was pretty well naturalised in the place, promised to do what he could for us; and at last he called one evening to say that with the help of some Egyptian friends he would try next day to arrange for us an entertainment of the kind we desired.

Next evening he came to us according to appointment, and accompanied by another German, to whom and to the strenuous exertions of his Copt wife, we were to be more immediately indebted for the promised *fantasia*. Our new friend had wedded his amiable lady after the customary manner of her people, that is to say, for such time as he should be pleased to retain her; for which privilege, and inasmuch as the lady was not remarkable either for beauty or youthful bloom, he paid down to her parents the moderate sum of ten dollars in cash, and covenanted to pay a further sum of ten dollars on returning her upon their hands, whether with or without children. While the wedlock lasted he was bound to provide suitably for her dress and maintenance, and to treat her well in all other respects; while she was to make a due return to her dear lord and spouse by love, constancy, and sedulous care of his domestic concerns. This exemplary lady had successfully exerted her interest to procure us admission into the harem of the Armenian director of the mint, which lay in a sequestered quarter of the town.

The house had all the requisites which the case demanded. It was so remote from the populous part of the town that the screeching of the fiddles was not likely to attract attention, and it was surrounded by high walls that effectually shut out all prying eyes. We entered a room very prettily arranged in the Oriental style, where we found some twenty persons already assembled, and were very cordially welcomed by the master of the house in the usual forms. Three sides of the room were furnished with the indispensable divan, on which the Armenian's family and some of his acquaintances reclined. Somewhat less than half the party consisted of ladies. On the side of the apartment where there was no divan three Arab musicians sat on the floor; their instruments were tambourins and two-stringed cocoanut violins, which they played with tolerable skill, and now and then accompanied with their voices. A couple of chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and the floor was covered with handsome carpets.

After we had saluted on all sides by laying our hands on our hearts and then on our heads, pipes and coffee were handed to us by the ladies, after which one or another was continually plying us with small glasses of brandy,

an incredible number of which were emptied. Between sips we had dates and olives offered us; and as we had to fish the latter out of the liquor with our hands, they were always followed by a gold embroidered cloth on which we wiped our fingers. Things went on in this way with short pauses all through the evening; and politeness required that there should be as little refusal as possible on the part of the guests.

The females present, the first in the country we had seen in a state of tolerable ease and freedom, wore rich Oriental garments, wide silk trousers, gold and silver embroidered jackets, and cachemir shawls round their waists. The person most worthy of note amongst them was Bamba, the youngest daughter of the house, a pretty girl of fourteen, whose face beamed with cheerfulness and good-nature. Another interesting person was the Armenian's daughter-in-law, a young woman of twenty or thereabouts, of a remarkably fine figure, dignified deportment and noble features. But what particularly attracted me was an expression of deep melancholy that pervaded her whole being, a characteristic so seldom found among the Orientals. Lastly, I must mention another pretty but extremely stout lady of like age, who seemed to use a sort of black silk veil she wore over her head for no other purpose than to set off the snowy whiteness of a bosom of rare amplitude and very scantily clothed, by covering it with the veil at regular intervals for a moment only. She continued this coquettish manœuvre all the evening, sitting in one spot and now and then smoking a pipe. The faces of the elder women were very uninteresting and commonplace, and there was a general flabbiness about them that showed itself still more strongly in the pendent under-lip almost always exhibited by Turkish women.

I have not much to say of the men. Our entertainer was a punchy Armenian, who showed us all the attention in his power, and none of the others were at all remarkable. Bamba seated herself beside me, and tried to entertain me by all sorts of little attentions. Sometimes she clapped her little hands and called to the negro to bring me *nohr* (fire), thinking my pipe had gone out; sometimes she pressed upon me a small glass of date brandy, and as she was too pretty to be put off with a refusal, I took whatever she offered me.

Suddenly the musicians, who had hitherto gratified us only with fantasias of various kinds, and Arab melodies, struck up a dancing measure: the door was opened, and two Arab dancers entered. They were girls between the ages of sixteen and twenty, tall and admirably proportioned. They wore wide white silk trousers embroidered with gold, not gathered together below but hanging loose over their small feet, which were without stockings and covered only with rose-coloured silk shoes. The upper part of their persons was clothed in a kind of vest of yellow silk, open very low in front, and adorned on the breast with gold tassels. Both garments were connected together by a crimson silk girdle folded very tight round the loins. They had jackets of red silk embroidered with silver, with loose white sleeves hanging down over the fingers, which fell back with every motion, and showed the well-formed arms glittering with gold and silver spangles. There was something lady-like in their not very dark faces;

especially their sharply cut eyebrows, arching finely over their sparkling eyes, and their delicately formed mouths were full of grace and witchery.

The dance began; and at first their movements, which were performed only with the body and arms, were easy and regular, but soon became more animated, and exhibited a more and more impassioned character as the dance proceeded. Their eyes shot fire; their bosoms heaved and panted, and their bodies assumed the most varied attitudes and inflexions. They twined round each other snake-like, with a suppleness and a grace, such as I had never seen before. Now, they let their arms drop, and their whole frames seemed to collapse in utter exhaustion; then might you see how a new thought arose within them, and strove to express itself in impassioned gestures. All this while, the music continued to play, and in its very simplicity was like a pale background to the picture, from which the glowing figures of the girls stood out in so much the stronger relief. Like the Spanish women, they wore a sort of silver castagnette on the thumb of each hand, with which they beat time to the music. The more strikingly the peculiar meaning of the dance was embodied in the performance, the warmer were the applauses of the company, and especially of the females. Bamba alone leaned back sometimes on the divan, and looked in my face with a smile and a glance of singular inquiry.

After a pause, the second dance began. One of the ghawazee took a little glass, filled with rose-water, between her teeth, and held it so without spilling a drop, whilst she executed the most rapid and difficult movements. She repeated nearly the whole of the preceding dance, and it was certainly no trifling effort of skill to go through it without emptying the glass. At last, she stepped up to one of the male spectators, and clasping him round the middle with both arms, she bent backwards, and continued her gesticulations without ceasing; at last, she leaned forward, and slowly poured the rose-water over his clothes, let the glass drop, kissed his lips, and bounded back into the middle of the room.

The second girl now came forward, and began again with an indescribable *pas*, stooping and sinking lower and lower; and the nearer she approached the floor, the gentler, I might almost say the more faint and dying, were her movements. Suddenly she sank down completely on the carpet, and lay quite still in a picturesque attitude. Thereupon, her companion sprang to her, grasped her round the waist, and strove by the tenderest caresses to recal the beloved being to life; her features, at the same time, exhibiting the most perfect and life-like expression of anguish and distraction. Gradually the seemingly insensible girl recovered animation, first raising herself up slowly and languidly; but with every succeeding second her frame grew more vigorous, her gestures more assured; until at last, both performers, as if to signify their joy, concluded the dance with still more glowing vivacity than before, and were greeted by the company with reiterated mashallahs!

In another *tour*, one of the girls went up to an old Copt, who was seated on the divan, and made him a pantomimic declaration of love, which, however, he seemed to reject, whereupon she put forth all her powers of fascination to soften the callous heart of the old gentleman. She

hovered round him with looks of longing entreaty, bent down her head till it nearly rested on his breast, gazed at him with an upshot glance, sometimes closing her eyes, whilst her lips were parted with an indescribable smile that half displayed her snow-white teeth; at length, he could resist no longer, and raised the suppliant from the ground. Sometimes gold pieces were laid on the cheeks of the dancers, and between their lips, by the male guests; and in the intervals between the dances, they played on their tambourines, and sang a melancholy monotonous air.

The company, too, were not altogether idle; now and then, one of the ladies jumped up from the divan, and mingled in the dance; and we, too, were once obliged to take part in it. Later in the evening, the whole party enacted a pantomime, or rather a tableau, the men assuming attitudes with the ghawazee, which, it must be owned, were not all of them quite decorous, according to our European notions. Others placed themselves on the divan, and formed, with the ladies, the most picturesque and fantastic groups, which were frequently changed with prompt and orderly facility, and, as it appeared to me, by previous concert. Our German friend told us afterwards, these were scenes from the Arabian Nights; and an old Copt recited passages from them, accompanied by music, in explanation of each scene.

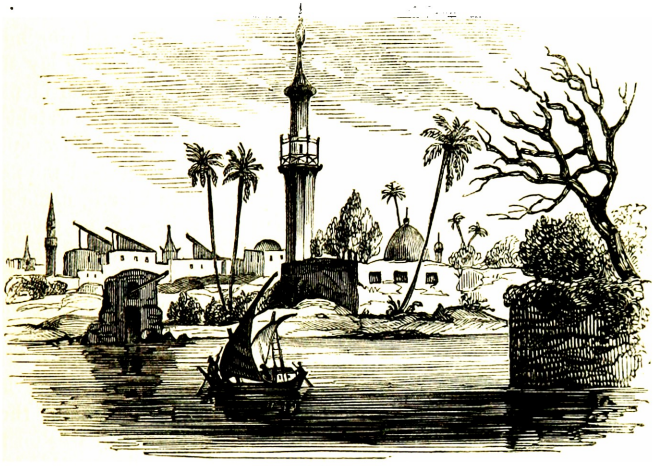
At last, pipes and coffee made their appearance again, and the German told us some more particulars of Oriental domestic life, which went to show, as we thought, that it is almost wholly material. Among other things, he counted up to us the cost of his wife's rich vest and shawl, and earnestly expatiated on the great advantages we should find in doing as he had done, and contract a temporary marriage, each of us, with a Copt lady. To me, he proposed that I should take little Bamba in that fashion, and the poor girl did not seem at all averse to the match. The man was a capital hand at building very pretty castles in the air.

It was now two o'clock, and we took our leave of our kind host, who had this day afforded us an interesting glimpse of Eastern life, such as it falls to the lot of few travellers to enjoy. As we left the house, the moon was shining down on Cairo. The town, usually so busy, was now still as death; and as we rode along towards the gate, between the yellow tombs of the caliphs, which, with their minarets and domes, form a small suburb, we heard nothing but the howling of the jackals in the desert of Suez, which spread out its interminable length before us in the moonlight. The night was fine; we cast a last look back at the Armenian's house, and saw light still streaming through the latticed windows. No one spoke a word. Yonder, the wild scene of nightly revelry, in which we had just been partakers; here the Nile and the Pyramids in their quiet grandeur:—What a contrast!

CHAPTER XXIV.

DEPARTURE FROM CAIRO.—VOYAGE UP THE NILE.

THOUGH the attractions of Cairo and its vicinity be very great, the desire to be once more in motion at length became too strong for them, and I made preparations for my departure. The mode of travelling in this country is the most delightful imaginable. It effectually secures what in traversing



Port of Old Cairo.

other countries can be very rarely tasted—the pleasure of solitude, which one may exchange almost as often as one pleases for those of society. I was myself, at least, particularly fortunate in this respect. A divinity student from Oxford, who had seen much of the world, and designed to accompany me as far as I should go, had taken a separate boat, that our movements might be perfectly independent, and, in case of accident, that we might part company if we pleased. The word boat, without explanation, would probably convey a false idea to the mind of the reader. My vessel was a craft of about forty feet long, with two masts and a couple of cabins, and manned by a crew of seven men. When the traveller has any suspicion that his future dwelling is infested with vermin, he causes it to be sunk for a few days in the Nile. The water is then pumped out; the cabins, deck, &c., are well scrubbed, and as soon as the whole is dry, his baggage and provisions are stowed away on board. My own boat was perfectly clean without this process, and so completely water-tight, that meal might have been kept in the bottom of the hold. Of the two cabins,

I appropriated the inner one to my stores, consisting of biscuits, maccaroni, vermicelli, tea, coffee, tobacco, with such other necessaries and luxuries as I might expect to stand in need of during a long voyage. The other articles of provision found a place where they could in the fore-cabin, than which nothing could be more comfortable. A narrow divan, which served as a sofa by day and as a bed by night, occupied one side of it; my books, maps, and papers, the other; and, the whole being finely matted, my pipes, coffee, dinner, or washing apparatus, as the case required, were laid out in the centre. They who carry fowling-pieces place them loaded by their bedside; and I, who had no such weapon, usually slept with a pair of pistols under my pillow.

It was somewhat late in the afternoon when we bade adieu to Boulak, the port of Cairo. There was not a breath of wind stirring, so that the Arabs were compelled immediately to take to their oars, which they did with every mark of cheerfulness, alternately laughing and singing as we skimmed along the smooth surface of the Nile. Our course lay through the narrow channel between the island of Rhoda and the continent. On both sides trees and luxuriant vegetation lined the banks and stretched forth over the water, affording us here and there, through narrow openings, glimpses of magnificent gardens and palaces. As we passed the palace of Halim Bey, strains of rich music, probably from the harem, came floating across the stream, and hushed for a moment the voices of my merry crew. In a short time we passed the points of the Nilometer, and the broad Nile opened upon us like a lake quivering beneath the sober light; for the sky, happening to be overcast, we were surrounded by none of the gorgeous tints which on a former occasion seemed to convert it into a flood of gold.

The boatmen not being compelled by custom to track after dark, we moored about sunset, close to the western bank. As soon as the kandjia was made fast to the land, by a short pole driven into the earth, the hajji and the boat's crew kindled their fires in small portable furnaces on the lee side of the deck, and began their cooking operations. The ordinary repast of the Arabs consists of lentil soup and bread; animal food being generally beyond their reach. Their constant beverage is Nile water. Yet, upon this coarse and simple fare, they are hale, athletic, and active. We spent the evening comparing the reasonings of various travellers on the site of Memphis. The barking of the village dogs was heard on shore until a late hour; and as I sat writing, long after my guest had left, I was now and then startled by the shrill scream of some aquatic bird on the river.

The mosquitoes, to escape from which the old Egyptians sometimes slept on the tops of lofty towers, were so exceedingly active during the night, that, what with their troublesome attentions, the squeaking of the mice and rats, and the loud talking of the Arabs watching on deck, who knew no other means of keeping themselves awake, I was fain to pass a great many hours in meditation. The moon rose rather early, and its light, entering at every crevice, and mingling with that of the glimmering lamp which I had left burning, imparted a wild aspect to the cabin. A short time before daylight the wind, which had blown but faintly all night, began to increase in strength, though, coming from the south, it was perfectly contrary. At

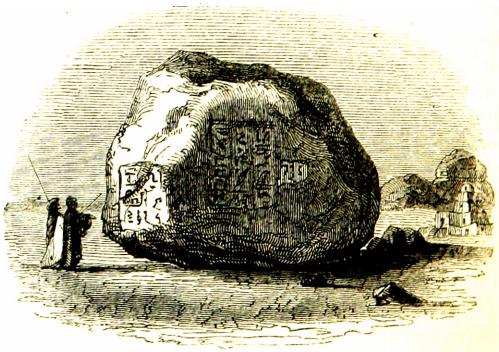
dawn, therefore, when I desired the *reis* to proceed, a number of men were sent on shore to *track;* that is, to draw along the boat by a cord, as horses draw coal-barges, &c., in England. From paintings in the sepulchral grottos of Eilithyias, and in the tombs of the kings at Gournou, we learn that this practice has prevailed from time immemorial; and one of my boat's crew, who accompanied me to the above grottos, supposing that the paintings he there saw represented the scenes which take place in Hades, exclaimed in a melancholy voice, "Ah, see! the poor Arabs are compelled to track, even in the other world!" In some places the water for a considerable distance from the shore is so shallow, that even there light barks find too little to float them; in which case the men take to their oars, though but very little way can thus be made against both wind and current. The ropes, oars, sails, and, in fact, all the appointments of a kandjia, are commonly of the most wretched description. The sky all the morning was dark and lowering, and in the afternoon it rained hard, while the cold was excessive. We passed close to Deir Hhattein, a small town, where a part of the Pasha's forces were encamped, preparatory, I imagine, to their being marched down to the shore to embark for Syria. In general, very small villages are, in Egypt, called *kăfr*, a word which properly signifies "hamlet," not "infidel," as has sometimes been supposed. This opprobrious term has a totally different sound, being pronounced *kăfeer*.

Hajji Suleiman, my dragoman, had had the misfortune to lose, on the day before we left Cairo, a little boy, fifteen months old, on whom he had bestowed the name of their prophet. The poor fellow, though he had still another boy, took it much to heart; and every now and then, after long silence and musing, would break out with some speech concerning his child. Scraps of morality, wise old sayings, and even the consolations of religion, were in vain called in to quell the feelings; grief would have its way; and though his cheeks were rough and dark, I often saw them moistened by unbidden tears. This morning, when he had brought me my chibouk, and saw me seated smoking by the cabin door, he drew near, and, in a would-be cheerful tone, observed, that little children, when they die, not only gain admittance to heaven themselves, but daily petition the Almighty in behalf of their parents; and, in proof of this, he quoted a verse from the Koran. Accordingly pious people often rejoice, he said, to lose a child, because it procures them a constant advocate before God: "but," added he, placing his hand upon his heart, "it still pains one *here!*" However, as his wife was young—not more than nineteen—he still hoped to have another son, whom he might name Mohammed, and thus be enabled to forget the one he had lost. The expenses of the funeral had amounted to thirty piastres, to defray which he had been compelled to sell his Syrian burnoose and several shirts. "And why, Suleiman," I inquired, "did you not apply to me?"—"You were not at the hotel, sir, just then, and we could obtain no credit." I observe among all these Arabs, poor as they are, proofs of strong natural affection, united with much sprightliness and vivacity.

Opposite the village of Deir, the Arabian chain sinks considerably in height. Traces of cultivation are few on the eastern bank, the ground between the mountains and the river being very narrow and rocky. On

the western bank, likewise, the Desert seems to approach nearer the river, so that this may perhaps be the narrowest part of the valley in Lower Egypt. The summit of the mountains on the Arabian side, though here lower than usual, is nearly as straight as if planed and levelled artificially; and the western face being perpendicular and exceedingly lofty, has the appearance of a vast wall, which, for five hundred miles, protects the land of Egypt from the encroachments of the eastern Desert.

On arriving at the village of El-Massara, we quitted our boats, and, mounting each a donkey, proceeded towards the vast quarries east of that village, whence, in all probability, the materials for the great public structures and pyramids of Memphis were drawn. Every little Nilotic hamlet stands in a grove of date-trees, which forms at once its riches and its beauty; and that of El-Massara was an extensive one. Turning this, and a large field of dhoura sefi, nearly ripe, we crossed a wide plain, planted with the fine tall grass from which mats are manufactured, and then entered upon a flat, stony desert, which conducted us to the foot of the Gebel-Mokattam. Here the ground on all sides is encumbered with enormous accumulations of rubbish from the quarries, which look more like an attempt to cut the whole mountain into blocks, and remove it from its place, than spaces cleared out by obtaining stones for building. At first sight it would seem that all the cities of Egypt, which, according to Diodorus, were 18,000 in number, might have issued forth from these quarries. The mountain has been cleft from top to bottom, and areas, as large as Grosvenor Square, levelled with the plain. In other places, the face of the cliff has been scooped out into immense halls, which, communicating with each other, run in vast colonnades from north to south, adorned with rude pillars, which, from their gigantic proportions, might seem to have been fashioned by the Titans. These spacious chambers extend far into the bowels of the mountain, whose superincumbent weight is everywhere supported by huge columns, left at intervals between the excavations. Of the entrances to the subterranean apartments, some are in the form of an arch, others like the Egyptian doorways. In Europe we have nothing resembling them, except, perhaps, those of Senlis, near Paris; and those quarries of Syracuse, in which the 7000 Athenians were imprisoned after the defeat of Nicias and Demosthenes. The catacombs of Alexandria, compared in magnitude with the excavations of El-Massara, are mere rat-holes; and yet the



Granite Block.

quarries of Hajjar Silsilis, in the Saïd, are still more immense than these. In one place the face of the mountain retreats in a straight line, and then turning suddenly, and continuing to run parallel with the river for perhaps a quarter of a mile, again projects in a right line into the plain, leaving between the two ways, thus formed, space enough for the site of a small city; yet the rocks which once filled this great area were sawn from their basis, and transported across the Nile. Here and there, near the mouths of the caverns, prodigious masses of rock, like those which detach themselves in winter from the summits of the Alps, have broken away from the overhanging cliffs, and rolled down into the plain, or been stopped among the mounds of rubbish which everywhere abound. Some of them had evidently been severed by human labour from the mountain; but there the perseverance and mechanical powers, even of the Egyptians, appeared to have failed. No force of man could lift them from the earth, and they were abandoned in despair.

From the mounds of rubbish accumulated at the mouth of these rocky chambers, which, it is clear, from numerous traces of fire, are sometimes inhabited, we could command a fine view of that long line of pyramids, which marks, towards the west, the extreme boundaries of the cultivated land. Storms of rain were rapidly hurrying over the face of the country from the Lybian Desert; and the thick haze, cloudy sky, and dismal aspect of nature, rendered the landscape almost sublime. Beneath our feet was the ancient road, running in a straight line across the plain, and terminating a little to the south of El-Massara, on the banks of the river, directly opposite the Pyramids of Abousir. Near the mouth of one of the excavations we found a hieroglyphic inscription, sculptured in a kind of tablet on the face of the rock. The legend, probably, contains some account of the quarries, but it has been purposely mutilated. Beneath it, on a base, which seems to support the tablet, are represented, in rude outline, the figures of three oxen, with as many drivers, drawing along, upon a kind of sledge, an enormous block of stone.

In returning towards the village, we crossed a range of sand-hills, or rather bank of sand, beginning near the village of Massara, and extending about half a mile beyond Towrah. It was no doubt the cemetery of the people employed in the quarries. In it have been found a great number of sarcophagi, composed of compact limestone, and for the most part perfect. Several of them contained entire skeletons; but the bones were brittle, and crumbled when they were handled. One coffin was found composed of a single piece of earthenware; and another, composed of four pieces of that material, fastened together with strings and pegs. It was unfortunately broken on taking it out; but, upon the upper part, the form of a female face could be traced, intended, no doubt, to be a portrait of the deceased. It had been painted, and the eyes were shown to have been ornamented with kohl, and it contained a few rude hieroglyphics. Within the sarcophagus were some bones, and a round plate of earthenware. At the distance of about two feet from this sarcophagus, a small figure, cut out of limestone, and inscribed with a row of hieroglyphics down the centre; and in other places a number of jars, of various forms and sizes, containing, in many

instances, black pulverised earth, were dug up; remains of walls, and of bricks, composed of the mud of the river mixed with small pebbles, likewise pieces of copper, greatly corroded; and the fragments of a small jar, or bottle, were also found near the sarcophagi. Other skeletons had been inclosed in wooden coffins, with wrappers of coarse woollen stuff. None of these bodies had been embalmed, or prepared with bitumen; but they appeared to have been salted, as a quantity of salt was found on the skeletons, and in the sarcophagi, and was collected by the Arabs for culinary purposes. Many skeletons, without sarcophagi or coffins, were also discovered, generally near the above-mentioned walls. These bodies appeared to have been buried in their clothes; one in particular, which had four or five dresses, and an outer garment of bright red, seemed by the hair to have belonged to a female. The skulls and bones were less deeayed than those in the sarcophagi; the hair in one instance was finely curled, and was of a red colour, which was supposed to have been held in abomination by the Egyptians. All the wrappers were composed of coarse woollen cloth, similar to that found in the third Pyramid of Gizeh. From the proximity of these tombs to the quarries, and from the extreme probability that they contained the bodies of the people employed in them, it was naturally expected that the remains of tools would be found, by which the nature of the metal, anciently used in quarrying stone, might have been ascertained. Nothing of the kind was, however, observed in these excavations, or in the quarries.*

Embarking late in the afternoon, we continued our voyage. Next morning the sky was thickly overcast with clouds, but the cold was less severe. We landed at an early hour in search of turtle-doves, which chiefly harbour in the woods about the villages; and while walking along the banks of the river we shot a small beautiful bird, called siksak by the Arabs, concerning which the Egyptian peasants have a curious legend, pretending that when the crocodile, in fine calm sunny days, ascends out of the river to sleep upon some sandy islet, this bird always keeps near, and, if danger approach, takes care to awaken him by his sharp note. They add another particular, which, however fabulous it may be, has prevailed in Egypt from the age of Herodotus down to the present day, and seems to be founded on the physical structure of the bird. The siksak, which is undoubtedly the trochilus of Herodotus, is armed at the point of each shoulder of the wings with a small sharp horn, like the talons of an eagle, the use of which the Arabs, with their habitual ingenuity, explain as follows:—The crocodile, they say, being at times tormented by a noxious kind of vermin, which creep into his throat, and suck his blood, lies down on the sand, and instinctively opens his mouth. The siksak, impelled by the same instinct, mistaken by the Arabs for friendship, coming up to the crocodile, hops into his mouth, and devours the leeches, in pursuit of which he will even descend far into the throat. The crocodile, forgetting the presence of his friend, sometimes closes his mouth and imprisons him; upon which the siksak, which is purposely armed for

* Colonel Vyse.

the occasion, lifts up its wings, and, pricking the tender sides of his throat with its sharp horns, quickly procures itself a safe return to upper air. Whatever may be thought of this legend, it is very certain that the crocodile is rarely seen unattended by one or more of these birds, which seem to approach him fearlessly, and to stand quite within his reach upon the sand.

I was one morning in bed, looking through the small window of my cabin, and the men were on shore towing, when I was roused by a loud voice of lamentation, in which the weeping and wailing of women predominated. I stepped out and saw, on the bank of the river, the dead body of an Arab, surrounded by men, women, and children, weeping and howling over it previous to burial. The body was covered with a wrapper of coarse linen cloth, drawn tight over the head and tied under the neck, and fastened between two parallel bars, intended as a barrow to carry it to its grave. It lay a little apart before the group of mourners, who sat on the bank above, with their eyes turned towards it weeping, and apparently talking to it. The women were the most conspicuous among the mourners. The dead man had been more happy in his connections than I imagine the Arabs generally are, if all the women sitting there were really lamenting his death. Whether they were real mourners, or whether they were merely going through the formal part of an Egyptian funeral ceremony, I cannot say; but the big tears rolled down their cheeks, and their cries sounded like the overflowings of distressed hearts. A death and burial scene is at any time solemn, and I do not know that it loses any of its solemnity even when the scene is on the banks of the Nile, and the subject a poor and oppressed Arab. Human affections probably glow as warmly here as under a gilded roof, and I am disposed to be charitable to the exhibition that I then beheld; but I could not help noticing that the cries became louder as I approached, and I had hardly seated myself at a little distance from the corpse before the women seemed to be completely carried away by their grief, and with loud cries, tearing their hair, and beating their breasts, threw out their arms towards the corpse, and prayed, and wept, and then turned away, with shrieks piteous enough to touch the heart of the dead.*

While we were shooting among the date-trees of Sagulteh, a village where we stopped to purchase such provisions as were to be found, it was exceedingly amusing to witness the wonder of the Arabs at the dexterity with which my companion brought down the flying birds. Men, women, and children crowded about us, some asking permission to look through my eye-glass, which they supposed to have some connection with the effect of the fowling-piece; others gazing in wonder at the detonating-caps, which they feared to touch, seeing that they aided in some inconceivable way in the work of death. Many of the children of both sexes were stark naked; and I saw one fine young maiden running from one house to another, who was nearly in the same state. Upon the bank of the river, in front of the village, a number of women, all young, were seated, selling bread, dates, onions, &c., most of them having children at the breast,

* Stephens.

evidently their first, as the bosom had not as yet acquired that pendent form, which, at a more advanced period of life, disfigures the appearance of an Egyptian female. They were nearly all tattooed, some having three or four lines of Arabic, probably sentences from the Koran, imprinted on the chin; others a line of small asterisms running on the inside of the right arm, from the elbow to the wrist, which was also adorned with the representation of a rich bracelet; and several a small blue flower or star, stamped upon the left breast. While young most of these women have handsome bosoms, elegantly formed limbs, small hands and feet, full dark eyes, and, in many instances, pretty faces; but, when once past the flower of their age, their features grow sharp and harsh, and their breasts (like those of the old Hindoo woman represented in Heber's Journal) acquire an incredible length, while all their limbs become spare and stick-like. Indeed they become, when old, exceedingly ugly, though the Arabs retain, under almost all circumstances, a look of good-natured simplicity, which prevents them from being displeasing: besides, they are women still, and as such, whether old or young, entitled at least to our respect; indeed, I never beheld one of these poor creatures, bending beneath the united weight of years and poverty, without experiencing the acutest commiseration—useless enough to them, but not to be avoided. Such of the Caireens as have been much in company with Franks, even as domestics, generally contract a violent prejudice against the peasantry, upon whom they affect to look down with extreme contempt. This morning, for example, at Sagulteh, the hajji, in other respects a humane man, observing that I suffered an Arab to take the fowling-piece in his hand, exclaimed with a kind of disgust, "Oh, sir, don't allow *that beast* to touch it." He thought we should all be polluted by the mere contact with a Fellah. And it is from persons of this description that Europeans ordinarily borrow their preposterous ideas of the Egyptian peasantry.

In walking along the western bank of the Nile, a little to the south of Sagulteh, we saw a confirmation of a curious assertion of Herodotus, which has been groundlessly ridiculed by the critics. He observes, that, upon the retiring of the river, the peasants cast the seed upon the mud, and then drove their oxen, sheep, and hogs into the field to tread it in; by which means, without ploughing or harrowing, the grain was sunk sufficiently deep into the earth. A large field, over which we passed this morning, had undergone this process, having never been ploughed or harrowed, but the wheat, strewed upon the soft mud, had been trampled in by various animals, and was now springing up beautifully. The practice, however, is by no means general; and, in fact, could only answer in the soft alluvial deposit close to the banks of the river. Speaking of pigs brings to my recollection two facts. The Mohamedans consider as unclean all animals which are shot, unless the sportsman, before life is extinct, come up with his game and cut its throat, turning the head towards Mekka, and reciting certain prayers. Aware of this prejudice, I inquired of Suleiman whether he could conscientiously eat what had been killed outright with a gun: he replied, "We who serve travellers, sir, eat everything—even pork!" In general, I should not care to trust a pork-eating

Mussulman; but in this instance the absence of religious prejudices was not accompanied by the absence of honesty. Rich Turks in Cairo and elsewhere, who hold the hog in abomination, nevertheless keep one or two of them about their houses as a preservative against the evil eye!

The Nile, which seems daily to increase in grandeur and magnitude, here resembled a little sea, studded with lovely islands, upon the rapid formation and disappearance of which I have heard abundance of exaggeration: some persons pretending that every inundation effects a total change in its channel; so that a traveller sailing up the country in spring, and returning in winter, would scarcely be able to recognise the features of the scene. All rivers of great volume, which overflow their shores, are more or less unsteady in their course; which is particularly the case with the Indus and the Ganges, whose waters have overthrown and washed away several ancient cities that stood upon their banks, and deserted others, which have in consequence fallen to decay. New islands, also, gradually spring up in their channels, while others of considerable magnitude crumble away and disappear. And such, likewise, is the case with the Nile; but the changes are slowly wrought. Nearly all the important islands, promontories, and sinuosities marked in Colonel Leake's excellent map, constructed several years ago, still exist in the same state; which is sufficient to exculpate the Nile from the charge of so extreme a degree of fickleness as it has been reproached with. However, the stateliest date-palms often yield to its gnawing waters; an example of which I observed this morning—a fine tree lay prostrate on the margin of the stream, which, though far from being entire, was sixty feet in length. Elsewhere the ruins of mosques, villages, or groves, partially undermined, hung nodding over the hollow banks, ready to be swept away by the first inundation.

The Nile was here covered with immense flights of pelicans, which lay in long rows upon the water, and, as we approached, rose in quick succession, screaming, and beating the stream with their wings. One of these birds which we killed probably weighed nearly forty pounds. The thick, soft, delicate plumage on the breast is milk-white at the roots, tinted at the top with a faint tinge of pink or rose-colour, which shows beautifully when the bird, just rising on the wing, turns its breast to the sun. Properly dressed, this portion of the pelican's skin would make superb muffs or tippets for the ladies; and should the article ever be in fashion, the Nile would furnish a supply sufficient for all Europe, and many poor Arabs might be advantageously employed. The flesh, part of which we cooked and tasted, in appearance resembled coarse beef; but had an oily fishy taste, and rank smell, which rendered it unpalatable, though it was all eaten by the Arabs, whose stomachs were less fastidious than ours. Belzoni, however, appears to have considered the flesh of the pelican as somewhat of a dainty. He must have had a keen appetite when he came to this conclusion. For my own part I would at any time as soon eat a vulture. The pelican being the largest bird known to the Fellahs, they have given it the name of Gamal el Bahr, or River Camel. There is a story that Mohammed making war upon the Christians, and being oppressed with thirst, water was brought to him by this bird, which is

hence called Sacar, or Water-carrier, which reminds one of the raven and the Hebrew prophet.

About nightfall a small strange boat, filled with Arabs, moored close under our stern for safety; for robbers, equal in celebrity to the Dakoils of the Ganges, are much dreaded on this part of the Nile; both Bruce and Niebuhr relate anecdotes illustrative of their dexterity. Soon after dark, I heard, for the first time, the wild dismal cry of the jackals, which were prowling near us on the banks of the river. They gave but one long howl, and then ceased; while the village dogs seemed upon the alert, barking incessantly in several parts of the plain, which must therefore be thickly inhabited. The wind blew in hollow gusts, and because there was more danger than usual, our guards appeared to be all asleep. Looking forth from my cabin windows, I witnessed a phenomenon not of very frequent occurrence upon the Nile. Volumes of white mist were rolling down the stream, obscuring its broad surface and the country on the opposite bank, where the palm-trees seemed to spring out of a sea of vapour. The moon, just then rising behind the Arabian mountains, and dimmed by a thin veil of clouds, cast its pale light over this unsubstantial mass, which appeared to be converted by its touch into waves of liquid pearl, transparent and bright like the curled clouds in a calm summer sky. A short distance a-head were seven small islands, lying almost in the middle of the stream. Being of considerable height, and covered with reeds and other fluvial plants, drooping and trembling over the water, they had a very picturesque effect.

In the course of the following day, we walked to the village of Iksoor, situated in a large grove of date-palms, inhabited by a tribe of Bedouins recently become stationary; and though half dispeopled by the recruiting system, it was larger, better laid out, and cleaner, than the generality of Egyptian villages. The poverty of this hamlet was extreme. Nothing could here be procured for money—neither bread, meat, butter, milk, nor eggs. Fowls, indeed, might have been purchased, but small and ill-fed, like their owners.

From Iksoor we proceeded by a good cross-road, bordered at intervals with rows of mimosa-trees, to the village of El Wuddi, where the same poverty prevailed. Milk, however, the principal object of our inquiries, is only to be obtained in the mornings and evenings, when the buffaloes, cows, and goats are milked. It was here that I, for the first time, observed twelve large and very fine palm-trees, growing from a single root. In all these villages we hear execrations poured forth against the Pasha for the oppressive way in which he recruits his armies; and the practices to which the Fellahs resort to elude his despotism, prove at once their intense love of home, and their aversion to a military life,—not their cowardice, for, when brought into the field, they fight with great bravery. As soon as the news reaches a village that a recruiting party is abroad—and it spreads over the country like wildfire—many men blind themselves with arsenic; others thrust some sharp instrument into one of their eyes, or chop off the forefingers of the right hand. We had one day thirteen Arabs in our service who were all thus mutilated. Nay, mothers, forgetting that

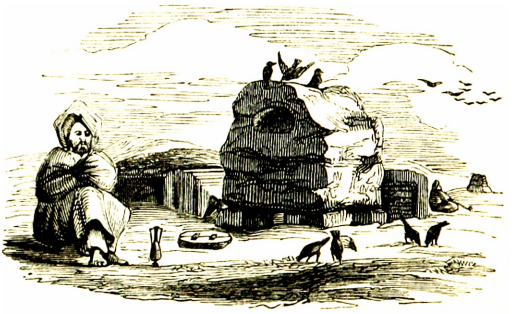
the Pasha's wars cannot last for ever, have even been known to blind or maim their own children. And to such an extent was this practice carried, that at length the Pasha found it necessary to make it punishable. An order was issued at Cairo to each of the principal persons in the city, commanding them to produce a certain number of men for the army, under pain of forfeiting 700 piastres for every deficiency. The consequence was, that the streets presented the desolate appearance observed during the plague; the shops were closed, business was suspended, and women wailed as for the dead; the soldiers and inspectors employed in levying the men soon discovered the lucrative trick of pressing invalids, and other persons unfit for service, from whom menaces and their own fears extorted money for their release.

But even this tyrannic order was found to be insufficient; for men still contrived, by practising on themselves, to elude the grasp of their oppressors; and at length the Pasha, in a moment of extreme irritation, issued the following circular, printed in Turkish, and addressed to the military governors of districts:—"With respect to the men whom we take for the service of our victorious armies and navies (war department), on their way to us—some draw their teeth, some put out their eyes, and others break their arms, or otherwise maim themselves; thus laying us under the necessity of sending back the greater part, and causing the deficiency in the report of the war department which I always perceive: Make up these deficiencies, by sending immediately all the men who are wanting—all fit for service, able-bodied, and healthy; and this you must do in concert with the sheikhs: and do thou also take care, in concert with them, to levy the conscripts demanded, and send them immediately, informing me at the same time, and with the least possible delay, of the number of men who remain in thy department. This is what I demand." These circulars were all sealed with the signet of Mahomed Ali.

In order to strike a blow at the practice of half blinding, the Pasha played off a practical joke, such as Pashas only can play off. He did not, in this case, send the poor victims to the galleys, neither did he fine nor flog them; but by the advice, it is said, of some European wag, he formed a one-eyed regiment, which was, at least, competent to do duty in garrison. This new decision, as soon as it became known, very generally prevented mothers from blinding their offspring, and men from putting out one of their own eyes; but had the Syrian war continued, I am persuaded that thousands would rather have put out both their eyes, than quit their own homes and families to perish for Mohammed Ali in a foreign land. Blindness is not viewed with the same horror by Orientals as by us. The princes, whose eyes a cruel policy has put out in Persia or Affghanistan, appear still to enjoy the world almost as though nothing had happened; and among the Fellahs of Egypt, few are more cheerful than those who, for many years, perhaps, have been unable to see the sun. They have a notion in Cairo, which is probably not peculiar to that city, that blind men are excessively impudent; and it appears to be quite certain, that they do habitually presume considerably on the good nature and forbearance of their neighbours. It may be questioned, however, whether

this fact is so discreditable to the blind, as it is honourable to the rest of the community who tolerate their eccentricities out of pity for their misfortune.

To return, we must do justice to the Pasha's government. Twenty years ago, the villages in this neighbourhood were so many nests of robbers, so that no stranger could with safety visit them. At present, though the race is far from being extinct, thieves are becoming more rare, the constant levies for his Highness's victorious armies, "drawing them away," to exercise their ingenuity in other quarters. I have heard the Swiss defend the mercenary practice of selling the blood of their fellow-citizens to foreign nations, by dwelling on the public advantage of getting rid, in distant wars, of the turbulent and unprincipled part of their population; peace, which to other nations is a blessing, being a curse to them, since it brings home all their thieves and highwaymen, to infest the roads, brawl in the taverns, and fill the gaols. If caitiffs of this description alone were kidnapped by the Pasha's Italians for the army, the Egyptian peasantry would have but little cause for complaint; but numerous as rogues are in Egypt, I fear that Ibrahim would hardly have achieved his Syrian victories had no honest man been admitted into the ranks.



Dovecot near the last Pyramid up the Nile.

CHAPTER XXV.

Voyage up the Nile.

In the ascent of the Nile each traveller meets with a peculiar set of incidents; some appear to be surrounded with perpetual dangers, others scarcely encounter a difficulty, while a third class seems to be completely taken up by their personal privations. In my own case the dangers and difficulties were few and far between, while the pleasure was perpetual, and I never went to bed at night without a wish that the voyage would last for years. Every circumstance by which I was surrounded, combined to increase the romance of the situation. Often in dangerous places we cast

anchor in the middle of the broad stream, so that when I threw open my cabin windows and looked out to enjoy the prospect by star or moonlight, we appeared to be lying in the midst of some land-locked sea with mountains and forests of unknown extent, sweeping along the edge of the horizon. The ideas which inhabited my own imagination, imparted a peculiar character to the landscape and the atmosphere. Events and creeds and people, discerned dimly on the remotest verge of history, appeared to surround me on all sides; the old Egyptians lived again; the tramp of the Persian coursers, following at the heels of Cambyses, seemed to be heard clattering over the Desert, where Macedonian and Roman and Arab also in their turn careered along. I used frequently, when the moon was up, to walk forth upon the deck where, at such hours, I was the only creature awake. The Arabs, wrapped in their tattered brown burnooses, lay here and there rolled up into balls, like so many gigantic hedgehogs. Afar over the plain, a light would be perchance beheld burning through breaks in the groves of palm-trees, while the spreading majestic Nile flowed past me, breaking in whispers against my boat's prow, and trembling as if with life beneath the moon-beams. The happiest man on earth might envy the deep calm of these hours. Never was there a purer or brighter sky than that which expanded its blue depths above, sprinkled thickly with stars of a magnitude and splendour unknown in northern latitudes. Occasionally a rout of jackals in pursuit of game—to me invisible, like themselves—would scour down the distant shore, filling the air with their melancholy cry, heard and lost at intervals among the hollows, or behind the rocks. Elsewhere, far upon the plain, was heard the bark of village dogs, which seemed to be answering each other, as if for the purpose of convincing night prowlers that they were not to be caught off their guard. When I had taken my fill of this enjoyment I returned into my cabin, where sleep would in a few moments convey me home, and place me in the midst of my children, who perchance at the same moment were dreaming of me. One morning, as we were entering on the confines of Middle Egypt, the wind blowing strongly from the south, we met with a little adventure, which at one time appeared likely to put an end, in a very summary manner, to all the pleasures of which I have been speaking. Of course there were no means of proceeding but by tracking, and for this purpose three men were sent on shore. My fellow-traveller had left his boat early, while I remained on board to write. At length I observed that the current, aided by the wind, was becoming exceedingly violent; that the three men on shore were unequal to the task of tugging us along, and that owing to the loftiness and steepness of the bank, there was no possibility of adding to their number. About ten o'clock in the morning we reached a bend in the river, where the bank was at least twenty feet high, and worn away at the base by the action of the stream, and, in consequence, very liable to land-slips or avalanches, which often sink boats in the Ganges. Round this point the Nile rushed along with fearful noise and velocity, forming many whirlpools and eddying vortices covered with foam, so that it required extraordinary force to drag forwards the kandjia through this "hell of waters." By great good fortune the other boat turned the promontory in

safety; but when mine came up, either the wind had increased and the fury of the eddying current along with it, or my Arabs, already fatigued or exhausted, made an untimely pause, thus giving the water a purchase, as it were, by which to cast us back. Our reis, a highly active, but not a strong man, knowing wherein the danger of our position consisted, endeavoured, by the most strenuous exertions with the pole, to keep away the boat from the overhanging bank, where huge masses of earth were ready to fall upon our heads; but the strength of the current was quite irresistible. It was in vain that he exerted himself: three feet from the land he could find no bottom, and his pole became useless. The kandjia, yielding to the force of the stream, now drew back the trackers, and went down the river, striking against the bank in the most fearful manner. In a few minutes the Arabs, recovering breath, again came to the charge, again dragged her along, until she was just turning the point, when the might of Old Nilus once more prevailed, and down the stream she went a second time. The other crew, who were out of danger, stood looking on, though our *reis* several times called upon them for help. Their master not being present, they would not stir.

Mohammed was not, however, to be discouraged: his passions, though engaged in a struggle with the elements, beginning to be excited, in a tone of anger and fierce reproach he commanded the trackers to exert themselves like men. They obeyed; and, dashing desperately forward, our little bark, in the midst of foaming whirlpools, had already turned the promontory, when the strength of the poor fellows again failed, and compelled them to yield to the stream. In a moment the kandjia was hurled furiously against the cliff; and a large mass of earth giving way, came thundering down upon the cabin: the vessel was in an instant upon her beam-ends, and one of the crew pitched overboard. The crash of the kandjia's side, in striking against the land, made me think the game was over; and she at once began to fill with water. Throwing off my cloak, therefore, I prepared to swim; though, owing to the severity of the cold, the violence of the whirlpools, and the steepness of the bank for miles down the river, the chances, had it come to that, would have been greatly against me. However, the sharp despairing cry of the reis and sailors, the extreme dismay of Suleiman, and the terrific appearance of the whole scene, confirmed me in the notion that the boat, at all events, was lost.

At this stage of the adventure, my companion's crew came running to lend their aid. The kandjia, in fact, was filling rapidly. Observing, as she floated down along the shore, a small projecting ledge of earth, I therefore leaped upon it, without pausing to consider whether it would bear my weight or not. Before the Arabs could follow my example, she had already passed the ledge, and it was too late. But, though standing on *terra firma*, my position was scarcely improved; for the bank projected so far over my head, and was so soft and crumbling, that another fall of earth seemed likely to be produced by the slightest motion. However, the Arabs on shore, quitting the tracking-line, hastened to my assistance; and, at the hazard of being themselves plunged into the river, leaned their bodies over the brink, and, giving me their hands, enabled me to reach the

summit. Meanwhile, a portion of the earth had fallen into the river, and the kandjia began to right herself. I now seized the cord; and, in a short time, we succeeded in keeping her steady: while the *reis*, Suleiman, and the other two Arabs (the man who had fallen overboard having been taken up), cleared off the rest of the earth. Monro and his servant, Abuzaid, returning from some distant village, found us thus engaged; and with their aid (for the trackers were worn out) I at length drew my unfortunate bark, soiled and shattered as she was, round the point which had so long defied our utmost exertions.

We pushed on for a few hours, but the wind continuing still ahead, and blowing stronger than ever, I became desperate, and went again on shore, resolved to wear it out. We were lying along the banks, on the Lybian side, in company with fifteen or twenty boats wind-bound like ourselves. It was near a little mud village, of which I forget the name, and several Bedouin tents were on the bank, in one of which I was sitting smoking a pipe. The wind was blowing down with a fury I have never seen surpassed in a gale at sea, bringing with it the light sands of the desert, and at times covering the river with a thick cloud which prevented my seeing across it. A clearing up for a moment showed a boat of the largest class, heavily laden, and coming down with astonishing velocity: it was like the flight of an enormous bird. She was under bare poles, but small portions of the sail had got loose, and the Arabs were on the very ends of the long spars getting them in. One of the boatmen, with a rope under his arm, had plunged into the river, and with strong swimming reached the bank, where a hundred men ran to his assistance. Their united strength turned her bows around, up stream, but nothing could stop her; stern foremost she dragged the whole posse of Arabs to the bank, and broke away from them perfectly ungovernable; whirling around, her bows pitched into our fleet with a loud crash, tore away several of the boats, and carrying one off, fast locked as in a death-grasp, renewed her headlong course down the river. They had gone but a few rods, when the stranger pitched her bows under and went down in a moment, bearing her helpless companion also to the bottom. It was the most exciting incident I had seen upon the river. The violence of the wind, the swift movement of the boat, the crash, the wild figure of the Arabs on shore and on board, one in a red dress almost on the top of the long spar, his turban loose and streaming in the wind, all formed a strange and most animating scene. I need scarcely say that no lives were lost, for an Arab on the bosom of his beloved river is as safe as in his mud cabin.*

In front of the village of El Kotoreh I observed a large party of people at work in a field gathering cotton. I was walking alone, a little behind the trackers, whom I soon saw engaged in a violent quarrel with these cotton-gatherers. Their kasheff, who had a musket in his hand, whilst some of his companions were ostentatiously loaded with pistols, had seized upon an old man, the father of the *reis*, and were dragging him away across the field for the army as they pretended. I had unluckily left my

* Stephens.

own arms on board; but, provoked at their insolence, I pushed through the crowd, and ran across the field in pursuit of the kasheff, who was dragging away the old man. Upon my coming near, and speaking in a loud and angry tone, he let go his hold, though he affected an air of authority, presuming, I suppose, on his musket. I walked up close to him, and, pronouncing the words Pasha and Firman, took the old man by the arm, and led him back towards the river, no one attempting to interrupt me, though the whole rabble followed at a few paces' distance. To get rid of them, I threatened the kasheff that I would immediately write to the Pasha, and have him disgraced, upon which he grew very civil, said he was merely in jest; and, on my inquiring why he carried a musket, pretended it was merely to protect his own people while at work in the fields. However, we learned in his village, that, having received an order from the Mamoor of the district to furnish a certain number of men for the army, he had, to spare his own people, actually set out early in the morning on a kidnapping expedition about the banks of the river.

A short distance beyond this village we noticed a very remarkable appearance in the sky, which seemed to portend the approach of a sand-storm; the whole horizon, on the edge of the Lybian Desert, being obscured by a dense cloud of a black and lurid colour, flushed with a deep blood-red. Excepting during a *typhon* in the Messenian Gulf, I have never witnessed so grand an atmospheric phenomenon. Though the wind blew but faintly, no one could doubt, from the whole aspect of nature, that a hurricane was at hand; and in a few minutes the big drops, which usually precede a tempest, began to fall. We were out on a bare open country, like a heath; but at the distance of about half a league there stood a grove of mimosa trees, towards which we hastened for shelter, but had not advanced many paces before the rain descended with great violence; so that, ere we could have reached the wood, we should have been drenched to the skin. In this dilemma nothing was left us but to crouch down beneath the low shelving sand-bank which marked the last rise of the inundation. On lifting up my head soon after, I beheld a spectacle of terrific grandeur: thick driving rain obscured the landscape towards the north, east, and south; but in the west, the whirlwind, having torn up a prodigious quantity of sand in the Desert, was hurling it aloft in surging columns, like the smoke of a capital city on fire; darkening the whole face of heaven, and seeming, as it came driving along the plain, to be about to overwhelm and swallow up at once the whole of the cultivated country, and the mighty Nile. In another moment, the sand-storm, mingled with rain, had reached us. The river, the earth, the sky—everything was hidden from our sight. My heart palpitated violently, my lungs seemed as if they would burst; I could scarcely breathe. Lest, therefore, we should be suffocated (as many have been by this Desert blast), we wrapped our heads in our cloaks, and, bending down our faces towards the earth, allowed the storm to expend the first burst of its fury before we again dared to look up. Neither of us uttered a word: but when the low fearful rustling, which accompanied the passing of the sand, had partly abated, I ventured to address my companion, who, like myself, had experienced a

strongly suffocating feeling during the storm—or, rather, during the whirling along of the sand—for the tempest still continued in all its fury. We now, however, began to think of our boats. Running, therefore, down along the bank, in the midst of torrents of rain, I discovered my kandjia at a distance, drawn close to the shore, and Suleiman, with the *reis*, and all his crew, engaged in preventing it from being driven out into the river and sunk; for the Nile, vexed by the whirlwind, resembled a tempestuous sea, black with mud, tearing up its banks, and tossing hither and thither our frail bark like a nut-shell. Five strong ropes, made fast to different parts of the vessel, and held by the combined efforts of our whole party, were barely sufficient to prevent it from being lost; for, though the heavy rain had beaten down the clouds of sand, the wind appeared to increase in vehemence every moment.

At length, late in the afternoon, the storm abated, the sky cleared up, and the sun shone forth upon the still agitated river. I now found, upon going on board, that the hurricane, which, as a spectacle, was magnificent beyond description, had done me considerable injury; my books, papers, maps, and bed having been wetted, or covered with ink, and my two coffee-pots—no trifling loss where none could be found to replace them—been thrown overboard. I now again landed, to spend the remainder of the day in the fields. The greater part of the western plain was here laid out in cotton plantations, which, partly covered with yellow flowers, partly with the bursting snow-white fruit, had an exceedingly beautiful appearance. The cotton-flower is bell-shaped, not unlike the tulip, though rather smaller, with rich bright saffron petals, each of which is marked on the inside with a red spot.

Late the same night, as I sat writing, with my little lamp burning dimly before me, I was startled by the sudden springing of some wild beast upon the cabin roof. From the weight with which he came down, I could not doubt it was a hyæna or wolf. Suleiman and the crew were all fast asleep as usual; and it was doubtless with a view of eating one of them that he had paid us this untimely visit. While I was laying down my pen, and stooping to snatch up a pistol, I expected to hear the gentleman in the midst of the Arabs; but as he took some little time to reconnoitre his prey before he pounced upon it, I was enabled to open the cabin-door, which I did very softly, and step out upon the deck before he descended. As it was dark, I had the lamp in one hand and a pistol in the other. There was a small piece of matting between me and the enemy, which I proceeded therefore cautiously to move aside. Suleiman lay wrapped in my Scotch plaid at my feet fast asleep, and at no great distance the other Arabs in the same condition. My light, which was none of the brightest, did not wake them, so that I had the hyæna, or whatever it might be, all to myself. Stepping on one of our little furnaces, I raised myself up so as to command a view of the cabin top, when, with a growl and a spring, my unbidden guest regained the bank of the river, and left me to my repose. For some time, however, my attention was divided between my notes and him, as I fully expected his return, but he either thought better of it, or got engaged in some other adventure, for I heard no more of him.

Soon after passing Boosh we came to a large sandy island, dividing the Nile into two very unequal streams, of which the eastern one only is navigable. This island, at the northern extremity, is very low, but rising gradually, it terminates at the south-east in high perpendicular banks, round which the river rushes with extraordinary velocity. A jungle of sedge and tall reeds, through which it is very difficult to force a passage, covers the whole surface of the island, and in warm weather must be a nest of serpents. On the south-western promontory I found a number of small semi-transparent pebbles of various colours; and the sand itself, coarse and angular, as not yet reduced to its proper state, seemed to consist entirely of particles of decomposed granite. It was raised in clouds by the wind, and driven with so much violence into our faces, that it was painful to open the eyes; so that a few hours passed in such a place would probably cause a dangerous ophthalmia.

Not far south of this island, and nearly in front of the village of Shendawieh, where the Nile is bordered by a bank of fine green turf, we came suddenly upon a party of three Fellahs and a boy, who were employed in digging a grave for a murdered man. The body lay on its back in the sun, close to the river, having no other covering than a coarse blue shirt. The head was bare, and blood was oozing from a deep gash in the occiput, and from the mouth, eyes, and nostrils. If one might judge by the features, it was the corpse of a Nubian, from about Dongola, and appeared to have been some hours in the river, being swollen and livid. Two young men were digging the pit on the edge of a field of dhourra, close to the pathway used by the trackers; while an old man sat by silently watching their operations. The boy, with a face of fear and wonder, knelt at the grave's head, looking anxiously on. When the pit was thought deep enough, the old man and the grave-diggers proceeded to take up the body, which they laid in the ground, with the head towards the west, and the feet towards Mecca and the Nile. A tattered garment, seemingly belonging to the deceased, was thrown over the face; the arms were stretched down by the sides; a quantity of dhourra straw was placed upon the body; and the earth closed over all. We could not learn the history of this murder; but it appeared to have been effected by those rude spears, with iron heads two feet in length, which are the common weapon of the Fellahs. Wherever was his home, if he had one, it was thus rendered desolate for ever. His wife and his children would await in vain his return. His fate they could never learn. They would probably suppose he had deserted them, and in their hearts upbraid him for his cruelty, and stand at the door of their hovel, looking till their eyes ached towards the Nile, and inquiring for him of any boatmen who came up out of Egypt; while he slept in his quiet grave beneath the feet of the trackers, in company with some of whom he had doubtless tugged and rowed in days gone by.

One morning, walking slowly along the river, admiring the richness and beauty of the western plain, my attention was suddenly attracted to the opposite shore by large volumes of smoke rising from among the reeds and long grass. At first they ascended slowly, and were diffused through the pure atmosphere, which they stained but for a moment, while bright

flashes of fire appeared through the rolling vapour. Presently I heard a noise resembling the quickly-repeated discharges of musketry, as if the whole army of Upper Egypt had been assembled there in mock fight. While musing on this fancy, I saw numerous pyramids of dark red flame on various parts of the plain; the cracking of the burning reeds became terrific, and the conflagration spread with incredible velocity; for the wind, blowing strongly from the south-west, actively propagated the flames, until at length nearly the whole country seemed but one vast bed of fire, from which clouds of black smoke issued on every side. In the back-ground was the Desert, whose white salt-like surface glittered in the sun; and the plain, on the western bank, with its beautiful corn-fields, woods, and villages, afforded a striking contrast to this sublime spectacle. Upon inquiring, I learned of the natives the cause of the conflagration: when the grass becomes too coarse and dry for the cattle, they set it on fire, after which a tenderer and more delicate herbage springs up. The same practice has long prevailed in Greece, and in some measure accounts for the destruction of the forests.*

Poets and travellers speak with enthusiasm of the sunsets of Italy, Switzerland, and Greece. I have seen the sun go down in each of those countries, but never with half the splendour which on this day accompanied his disappearance; and could I succeed in reflecting upon the reader's imagination half the grandeur of this gorgeous show, he would, unquestionably, concur with me in thinking that, but for its evanescent nature, it was far more worth a voyage to Egypt even than the Pyramids. No sooner had the sun's disk disappeared behind the Lybian Desert, than the whole western sky along the edge of the horizon assumed a colour which for want of a better term, I shall call golden; but it was a mixture of orange, saffron, straw colour, dashed with red. A little higher, these bold tints melted into a singular kind of green, like that of a spring leaf prematurely faded; and over this extended an arch of palish light, like that of an aurora borealis, conducting the eye to a flush of deep violet colour, which formed the groundwork of the sky on the very skirts of darkness. Through all these semicircles of different hues, superimposed upon each other, there ascended, as from a furnace, vast pyramidal irradiations of crimson light, most distinctly divided from each other, and terminating in a point; and the contrast between these blood-red flashes, and the various strata of colours which they traversed, was so extraordinary, that I am persuaded no combination of light and shade ever produced a more wonderful or glorious effect.

At Kolokosaneh we found coffee-houses, with ghawazee of the most dissolute kind; and proceeding thence by clear path-ways leading through gardens and mimosa woods, over a country richly cultivated with wheat, dhourra, and sugar-cane, here springing up at the foot of the loftiest date-trees, we arrived at Semelud, a large and thickly-peopled town, with a mosque and noble minaret towering aloft, white and glittering, among a forest of palms. Still further to the west was a wood of the same trees, but

* History of the Manners and Customs of Ancient Greece.

with their intervals so completely filled up by an undergrowth of acacias, tamarisks, and mimosas, that the whole appeared, at a distance, like the rich masses of verdure of an English forest. Night and mooring time approaching, we struck into a narrow pathway leading to the Nile. It was a lovely evening, soft and balmy as June, the south wind having died away to a gentle breeze, which wafted far and wide the perfume of the bean-fields, now in full blossom, mingling with the mild fragrance of the ripe dhourra, which the husbandmen were threshing with long sticks in the fields. A rich old Turk, mounted on a well-fed black donkey, and followed by an attendant with a fine led horse, travelled with us for several hours. The boys, playing on the green sward about the different villages, saluted us civilly as we passed, with the Salam Aleycum, to which we returned the customary Aleycum Salam. They appeared to be well fed and happy; a thing of rare occurrence in Egypt. We reached the banks of the river, a few hundred yards to the north of the point where the gloomy frowning cliffs of the Gibel et Teir, or "Mountain of Birds," hang over the Nile, and there moored for the night.

The land in this part of the Hermopolitan Nome is in many places covered with a tall sedge, which looks as verdant and beautiful as sugar-cane. The peasants, early in the morning, were busily at work in the fields, some getting in the dhourra, others preparing the ground for another crop. The Egyptian plough, though originally invented by Osiris, is perhaps the rudest instrument of its kind now in use, consisting merely of three pieces of wood, of which two form the handle, and the third the share. No iron is used in its construction, excepting a small band, which keeps together its several parts. Two cows or bullocks yoked together by a long beam of wood, from the centre of which the plough is suspended, draw the rude machine along. The animals at work in the fields through which we passed, being refractory or unused to the labour, constantly ran out of the right course, and drew from their director, who was ambitious of exhibiting his best skill before the strangers, the opprobrious epithet of *kelb*, or "dog," which an angry Arab applies indiscriminately to man or beast. The ploughman was followed by an older man, his father or master, who, with a light kind of hoe or mattock, broke the rough clods left among the furrows; a very necessary process after such imperfect tillage.

The vast perpendicular cliffs of the Bird Mountains, now in the morning no longer gloomy, continue for some miles to confine the course of the stream towards the east, until at length a sinuosity in the river leaves between it and their base a narrow slip of ground, which is brought into cultivation. A little to the north of the village of *Gebel et Teir*, there is a break in the chain, where the rocks bend inward in a semicircle, about the centre of which they have been shattered, rent, and bored by the labour of man; and on the small sandy plain lying between the horns of the half-moon, we saw the ruins of an ancient wall, which seems to have extended from mountain to mountain, filling up the space left open by the retreating of the rocks. In the face of the cliffs were numerous catacombs or grottoes, to examine which we here crossed the Nile. It soon became evident why the Arabian chain is in this part called the "Mountain of Birds;" for the

number of cormorants and black Damietta ducks frequenting it is prodigious. Every day, early in the morning, they arrive in vast flights from the Desert; the rustling of their wings in the wind, though at a great height above our heads, sounding like the rushing of a storm; and, having reached the mountains, settle in clouds upon the rocks, descending at intervals, and diving for fish, which must here be very plentiful in the deep waters below.

The feathers of the above-mentioned species of duck are said by some travellers to be nearly ball-proof, on which account the Arabs, in their picturesque phraseology, denominate them ball-eaters. I had not myself the pleasure of tasting them, but they have been pronounced by good authority unpalatable.* In addition to the ducks and cormorants, the Gebel et Teir abounds with pigeons, hawks, and swallows. Of this last bird the entire plumage is of the same colour with the sand, a remark which may also be applied to the partridges and to many reptiles, which consequently can scarcely be distinguished in their resting-places. It is a convenient thing that the colour of their coats remains in fashion throughout the whole year in Egypt, whereas in the north of Europe some animals are at the chameleon-like trouble of changing. About 200 yards from the river's edge, and at the southern extremity of a small grove of palm-trees, the sand has lately been excavated to the depth of about twenty feet. In this hole is seen a remarkable palm-tree; it is still erect, and had been entirely overwhelmed by the drifted sand; a new head and stem had sprung up from the old one, almost equal to the parent tree; but the leaves of its ancient head being still attached to their birth-place, it presents the appearance of one tree growing on the top of another. On the summit of Gebel et Teir is a Coptic convent. The inhabitants commenced baking for us; not having leisure to wait, the chief priest offered me a stale but substantial bun, having Coptic characters and crosses on it; this is sacrament bread: he begged for an empty bottle, in the name of the Virgin. Denon gives a drawing of this place, which he calls the Convent of the Chain; accompanied by an account, that while boats were passing, the monks used to be let down from the height into the river, to swim and beg, or rob. In this convent, during a former visit to this country, I met with a very interesting adventure, which seems to have something romantic in it, though it really occurred. On reaching the foot of the Bird Mountains, I was much struck by the singular form of the rocks, but my attention was soon diverted to a still more remarkable object. I saw a man appear on the summit, whence, with inconceivable agility, he descended by means of a rope, and, throwing himself into the river, approached our boat to ask alms. It was one of the Coptic monks, whose custom it is to implore the charity of the passers by in favour of their convent. The great rapidity and address with which the man had come down, and his answers to some of our questions, having excited our curiosity, we rowed ashore, and ascended in the track of our guide by the steep and narrow path cut in the rock, which he had himself traversed. By this means, not without much

* Sir Frederick Henniker.

difficulty, we reached the top, from whence our eyes wandered over an immense horizon. Beneath our feet flowed the Nile, bordered by many verdant spots, until it wound away in the distance through the fertile plains of Minieh. Numerous villages, with their palm groves, and herds of buffaloes and flocks of goats scattered over the plains, and the rich vegetation of the country, presented the most pleasing and diversified scene. What a contrast struck us as we looked towards the spot which we had first reached! Blocks of stone, detached and scattered here and there over a desert of sand, extending further than the eye could reach, presented an image of chaos: the hand of man had never attempted to change this barren tract into a fruitful soil; and it is probable that the endeavour would have proved vain. We next perceived a wretched hut, which the monk pointed out to us as his dwelling, situated in the midst of a small cemetery; and this convent, which resembled most other monasteries in nothing but its elevated position, did not appear to us at all calculated to inspire a love of retirement. Having satisfied our curiosity, we were going to quit this place, which had so little to recommend it, when we suddenly heard some words spoken in the beautiful language of Petrarch and Tasso. We turned to the side from which the voice proceeded, and beheld an old man, whose lofty and majestic form was unbent by age, and who, introducing himself to us as the prior of the convent, invited us in the most polite terms to enter and rest ourselves. Extremely surprised at meeting, under the coarse habit of a Coptic monk, a man familiar with the language and customs of Europe, we accepted his invitation, and sat down on a stone bench; our host and three other monks, the only inmates of the convent, immediately set before us some dates and bread, still quite warm, which they had just baked in the ground between two stones, according to the manner of the country.

Meanwhile, I attentively surveyed the singular and surprising individual whom we had so unexpectedly met with in this place. A long silvery beard descended in curls upon his breast; his eyes still retained all the fire and vivacity of youth; yet there was in his looks something gloomy, and expressive of profound melancholy; his features were dignified and regular; his mouth, which seemed as if it never smiled, diminished the effect of his fine countenance, which might have been compared to a beautiful northern landscape, deprived, by a misty atmosphere, of the effects of light, and of the brilliant tints of the south. Being no longer able to repress the interest, or rather the curiosity which I felt, I ventured, with some hesitation, to ask him some questions on his situation, and the reasons that could have induced him to adopt it; adding, that Egypt could certainly not be his native country. A transient expression of melancholy overspread his countenance, and being sensible of my indiscretion, I begged him to pardon my curiosity, in consideration of the interest I felt for him. He replied, that there was nothing particular in his history to merit the attention of anybody; that he was by birth a Roman, and that being the youngest of his family, his parents had educated him for the ecclesiastical profession, for which he had a decided aversion; that flying from the paternal roof, he had passed the greater part of his life among infidels, whose faith he had

even embraced; that the death of an adored being had made him sensible of the enormity of his faults and his errors; and that, determined to pass the remainder of his life in penitence, he had chosen this wild and desert spot to end his days. He thus concluded his short narrative; and turning his eyes toward the cemetery, added: "Port of the wretched! the only refuge against the storms of life, why dost thou not present thyself to the imagination of men, when, agitated by tumultuous passions, and unbridled desires, they act as if their life were without limit, and their afflictions without end; whereas, everything tends towards thee, and the remembrance of the good we may have done in this world, alone accompanies us into the next, and survives our death." Moved by these words, and the expression which accompanied them, we took leave of the venerable old man, who gave us his blessing on our departure. Nine months after, on my return from Upper Egypt, being desirous of once more seeing the Coptic prior, I took the road to his convent; as I approached, one of the monks perceiving me, pointed to a fresh grave. He had ceased to suffer.*

Dr. Olin, who did not visit the convent, sketches, very graphically, the manner in which its inmates sometimes descend to collect alms upon the Nile. "We were still nearly a mile distant," he says, "when a man appeared on the cliffs that overhang the river, crying out to us with all his strength of lungs. He addressed us in a mixture of Italian and Arabic, 'Christiano Howaga,' which, it seems, is their standing salutation, as our crew repeated it frequently before the aërial beggar made his appearance. He seemed, from his dress, to belong to the fraternity, and, as we drew nearer, offered low prayers for the safety of our voyage. A man perfectly naked soon after approached, descending the precipitous rocks, which appeared inaccessible to all but the winged race, who make it their habitation. He bounded along with frightful velocity from the summit to the base of the mountain, and, plunging into the river, here about three-fourths of a mile wide, swam towards us with incredible speed, crying aloud, as he cleft the turbid waves, 'Christiano Howaga.' We were ascending the stream with a fair wind, and the strong current swept him far below us. Soon, however, he reached the opposite shore, and running swiftly along the sandy beach for perhaps a mile, plunged again into the river at a point considerably above us, and being now aided by the current, soon succeeded in reaching our boat, reiterating his learned salutation, 'Christiano Howaga.'"

I shall not here pause to describe the ruins of Achoris, though we spent considerable time in the examination of them; for the stupendous remains of Upper Egypt render everything else in the Valley of the Nile, by comparison, insignificant. We saw chapels, and inscriptions, and capacious tanks excavated in the living rock, which interested us greatly at the time, because, with the exception of the Pyramids, we had beheld nothing of the nobler works of the Egyptians; but they scarcely deserve to detain us from the wonders of the Said. The Arabs of this neighbourhood are a wild, uncouth race, who have the reputation of being both ferocious and dishonest. During our visit to the ruins, we startled a number of women engaged in collect-

* Baroness Minutoli.

ing salt, which was here spread in a thin crust over the surface of the Desert. Uttering a cry of surprise and terror, they left their baskets, and fled towards the rocks, among the cliffs and hollows of which they speedily disappeared. While we were laughing at their unnecessary alarm, a number of Bedouins, with long spears and shields, rushed forth from a ravine, obviously with the intention of attacking us; but were deterred from carrying their design into execution by the sight of our pistols, the burnished handles of which, protruding from our girdles, flashed brightly in the sun. We had been repeatedly warned against entering any of the villages in this district, the inhabitants of which, one of our attendants described by the significant phrase of *cativa gente;* and, in fact, two of them, fellows of most truculent aspect, and formidably armed, dogged us for several miles, but seeing no chance of effecting anything, retreated at length to their lairs.

Next day, part of which we spent in the Necropolis of Achoris, was Christmas. Having satisfied our curiosity, we descended by a rocky flight of steps to the plain, and, following the pretty rural pathway, leading along the foot of the Bird Mountains, directed our course towards Minieh. The heat was quite as great as during very warm summers in Europe, but had no enervating effect. Skylarks and butterflies on the wing; fields enamelled with bright wild flowers; eagles and falcons wheeling aloft among the stupendous precipices; and foxes and jackals basking in the sun at their feet—were circumstances at variance with our ideas of winter, which, in fact, was now over for us. There were a great many large caverns in the base of the mountains, which smelled like the dens of wild beasts, and were thickly strewed with bones. As we walked along, my companion brought down, from a great height, a small brown eagle, which fell like a clod among the rocks, and measured, when his wings were expanded, at least five feet. At the foot of this desolate range, we ate our noon-day meal—biscuits, Arab cakes, and a few hard eggs—water was a luxury beyond our reach—yet, no London Alderman enjoyed his Christmas fare better, so keen and unceremonious were our appetites. On the way to Minieh, we passed by a ruined village, picturesquely situated on the slope of a rocky hill; and, after a walk of several leagues, reached our boats a little before dark, when Suleiman met us with the welcome intelligence that dinner was ready.

The Nile, in front of Minieh, has been described by one traveller as broad, by another as narrow; and their disagreement has been regarded as a proof, that the relations of travellers are not to be relied on. But the stream is here divided by a low sandy island, and when this is concealed by the waters, the channel is of a magnificent breadth; but when the Nile shrinks within its banks, and falls below a certain level, the island reappears, and diminishes the grandeur of the river; and if, at this season, the observer should confine his view to the branch next the town, its breadth would not be extraordinary. The sand bank was visible when I passed; but rising very little above the level of the river, and being covered in many places with a thin veil of water distributed in small ponds, it might very easily have been overlooked, as it did not sensibly interrupt the uniformity of the surface line.

On entering the town next morning, we found it was as yet too early even for the Arabs to be abroad; very few persons being in the streets, but such as were returning from their devotions in the mosques, to which I had heard the voice of the muezzin inviting them long before dawn. The very bazaar, which is large, neat, and peculiarly clean, was still destitute of all signs of activity, excepting two or three women with baskets of nice fresh bread, forty cakes of which were here sold for a piastre. Two of these, with tea or coffee, would be a breakfast for a man. Eggs we also found at the rate of forty for a piastre; and three bottles and a half of new milk for twenty *paras*, or about one penny farthing. In all these towns the coffee-houses, where dancing girls are invariably found, appear to be constantly open. The dwellings of such devout persons as have performed the pilgrimage to Mekka, are generally covered with a kind of white stucco, upon which, for I know not what reason, fishes and different kinds of monsters are represented; and, among others, I observed a figure, which Suleiman assured me was intended for a crocodile; but to render the spectator quite certain of this, it would have been necessary to write the name below. The city of Minieh contains several mosques, straight clean streets, and rather neat shops, and appears to be more populous and opulent, than any of the towns farther down the river.

Lord Lindsay, in speaking of this place, relates from Ibn Batuta, a story which may be worth repeating:—Ages ago, in the days of the Abbassides, to whom Egypt bowed the knee, from the middle of the eighth to that of the ninth century, one of the Caliphs, even the great Haroun Al Raschid himself, was displeased with the Egyptians, and desirous at once to punish and make them an example to others, picked out the lowest of his slaves, one Ibn Khasib, the bath-warmer of the palace, and sent him governor to Egypt, in the confidence that the insolence, rapacity, and cruelty of such a ruler, would amply express his resentment. Never was a man more mistaken than the Caliph: never was Egypt happier than under the mild rule of Ibn Khasib. His fame spread far and wide; many even of the Caliph's immediate courtiers, and one, especially, of his nearest kinsmen, visited, and were entertained by him; in short, Ibn Khasib was a second Chebib.

On the return of his kinsman to Bagdad, the Caliph, who had remarked and wondered at his absence, inquired where he had been? "To Egypt," replied the prince, and proceeded to extol the humanity, justice, benevolence, and generosity of the governor, and display the presents he had received from him. The Caliph, enraged at the failure of his scheme, sent instant and peremptory orders for his degradation; that his house should be razed to the ground; his goods confiscated, his eyes put out, and that he should be cast forth, naked and a beggar, into the streets of Bagdad.

To hear, of course, was to obey; a few weeks, and behold Ibn Khasib, friendless, hungry, destitute, groping his way through the streets, or sitting near the gate of the Seraglio, forgotten by his old fellow-slaves, unheeded by the nobles who had eaten his bread and salt in Egypt, and whose silken garments touched as they swept past him; the summer birds fly with the summer flowers!

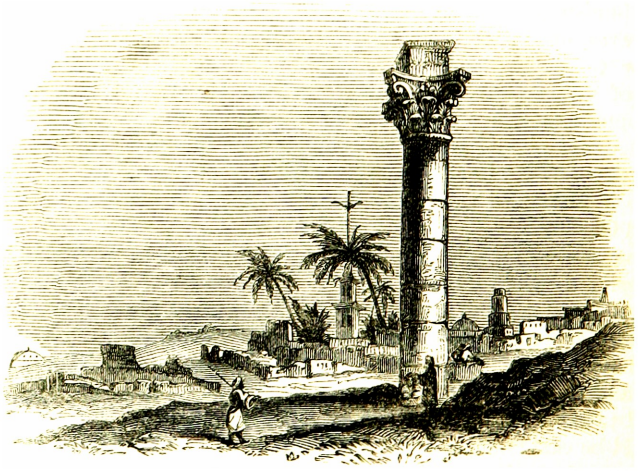
He was accosted one morning by a poet:—"Ibn Khasib," said he, "I was on the point of starting for Egypt with a poem in your praise; your arrival here in Bagdad saves me the trouble of that long journey; and, if you will listen, I shall have great pleasure in repeating it."

"Poor and blind, naked and miserable," replied Ibn Khasib, "what have I to give thee? Go, my friend, seek a richer patron; *my* star is set."

"Only listen to me," replied the child of song; "and as for recompense, God only do for you as you have done for others!"

Khasib listened, and his heart was touched; they were the first words of sympathy that had consoled him in his misfortune. "Cut open this seam," said he, when the song was ended, "and accept this ruby;" it was the only valuable that he had been able to secrete of the wreck of his fortunes. The poet expostulated. Ibn Khasib insisted; and the poet accordingly carried the gem to the jewellers' bazaar.

"Such a stone," cried the syndic of the jewellers, "can only belong to the Caliph;" and before the Caliph they brought him. He told his little story; the Caliph's eye glistened; he sent for Ibn Khasib, owned he had done wrong, loaded him with presents, and sent him back to Egypt, proprietor of Minieh, the spot he was fondest of in all the valley of the Nile,—that Nile, to whose bounty the poet's fancy had likened his own; the place is still called after him, "Minieh Ibn Khasib," and his posterity flourished there, for I cannot say how many generations, since they were extinct, when my authority, Ibn Batuta, visited the spot in the fourteenth century.



Ruins of Oxyrynchus.

CHAPTER XXVI.

From Minieh to Manfaloot.

Having no other occupation to while away the time, I went in the evening to the Bath. The Arabs and Turks soon began to pour in, in throngs; they came without any respect of persons; the haughty Turk, with his pipe-bearing slave, and the poor Arab boatman; in short, every one who could raise a few paras. It was certainly not a very select company, nor over-clean,—and probably very few Europeans would have stood the thing as I did. My boatmen were all there. They were my servants, said the rais, and were bound to follow me everywhere. As I was a Frank, and as such expected to pay six times as much as any one else, I had the best place in the bath, at the head of the great reservoir of hot water. My white skin made me a marked object among the swarthy figures lying around me; and half-a-dozen of the operators, lank, long fellows, and perfectly naked, came up and claimed me. They settled it among themselves, however, and gave the preference to a dried up old man, more than sixty, a perfect living skeleton, who had been more than forty years a scrubber in the bath. He took me through the first process of rubbing with the glove and brush; and having thrown over me a copious ablution of warm water, left me to recover at leisure. I lay on the marble that formed the border of the reservoir, only two or three inches above the surface of the water, into which I put my hand, and found it excessively hot; but the old man, satisfied with his exertion in rubbing me, sat on the edge of the reservoir, with his feet and legs hanging in the water, with every appearance of satisfaction. Presently he slid off into the bason, and, sinking up to his chin, remained so a moment, drew a long breath, and seemed to look around him with a feeling of comfort. I had hardly raised myself on my elbow to look at this phenomenon, before a fine brawny fellow, who had been lying for some time torpid by my side, rose slowly, slid off like a turtle, and continued sinking, until he, too, had immersed himself up to his chin. I expressed to him my astonishment at his ability to endure such heat; but he told me that he was a boatman, had been ten days coming up from Cairo, and was almost frozen, and his only regret was that the water was not much hotter. He had hardly answered me before another and another followed, till all the dark naked figures around me had vanished. By the fitful glimmering of the little lamps, all that I could see was a parcel of shaved heads on the surface of the water, at rest or turning slowly and quietly, as on pivots. Most of them seemed to be enjoying it with an air of quiet dreamy satisfaction; but the man with whom I had spoken first, seemed to be carried beyond the bounds of Mussulman gravity. It operated upon him like a good dinner; it made him loquacious, and he urged me to come in; nay, he even became frolicsome, and, making a heavy surge,

threw a large body of the water over the marble on which I was lying. I almost screamed, and started up as if melted lead had been poured upon me; even while standing up, it seemed to blister the soles of my feet, and I was obliged to keep up a dancing movement, changing as fast as I could, to the astonishment of the dozing bathers, and the utter consternation of my would-be friend. Roused too much to relapse into the quiet luxury of perspiration, I went into another apartment of a cooler temperature, where, after remaining in a bath of moderately warm water, I was wrapped up in hot cloths and towels, and conducted into the great chamber. Here I selected a couch, and, throwing myself upon it, gave myself to the operators, who now took charge of me, and well did they sustain the high reputation of a Turkish bath; my arms were gently laid upon my breast, where the knee of a powerful man pressed upon them; my joints were cracked and pulled; back, arms, the palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, all were visited in succession. I had been shampooed at Smyrna, Constantinople, and Cairo; but who would have thought of being carried to the seventh heaven at the little town of Minieh? The men who had me in hand were perfect amateurs, enthusiasts, worthy of rubbing the hide of the Sultan himself; and the pipe and coffee that followed were worthy, too, of the same mighty Seigneur. The large room was dimly lighted, and, turn which way I would, there was a naked body, apparently without a soul, lying torpid, and tumbled at will by a couple of workmen. I left the bath a different man; all my moral as well as physical strength were renewed; I no longer drooped or looked back; and, come what would, I was bent upon Thebes and the Cataracts.*

Setting sail with a fair wind, and making great way, in spite of the strong current, we arrived, about twelve o'clock, at Benihassan. A broad way, formerly adorned on either side with a row of pillars, leads directly up the steep to the sepulchral excavations. In antiquity the ascent was rendered easy by a flight of steps, constructed of a black compact stone, frequently found in globular masses in the neighbouring cliffs.† The tombs or temples—for they appear to have been both—are cut in the rock in a straight line, running north and south along the face of the mountain, about half-way to the summit. A broad terrace, now covered with sand and partly broken up, extends in front of them along the hill, and forms an esplanade, upon which all the entrances to the tombs open, like so many street doors. Of these edifices, the first, reckoning from the north, is adorned in front with a spacious and lofty portico, having four large columns, in their proportions and simplicity resembling the Doric; and consists of two chambers, a sekos and an adytum; the former of large dimensions, nearly sixty feet in length by forty in breadth; the latter small. The surface of the walls, divided into numerous compartments, is covered on all sides with paintings, representing, with more or less success, the domestic occupations and amusements of the ancient Egyptians; and notwithstanding the difference of taste and style, and their decided inferiority, they reminded me of the ancient frescoes of Spinello Aretino, and Buffal-

* Stephens. † Cadalvène et Breuvery.

macco, in the Campo Santo at Pisa. To enter into anything like a minute description of the various compartments, would be a tiresome and a useless task; nothing but a series of faithful engravings, coloured on the spot, could convey a correct idea of the subjects they represent, or of the manner in which those subjects are treated; but thus copied, they would deserve to be carefully studied by the antiquary, as no relic of antiquity existing in Egypt seems so well calculated to throw light on the manners of its ancient inhabitants. Here, in fact, we see delineated, and not altogether without talent, the mode of tilling the ground; of gathering in the harvest; the vintage; their manner of hunting, fowling, fishing; their style of dancing, wrestling, &c. From these sculptures, also, we learn that the Egyptians were acquainted with the manufacture of linen, glass, cabinet-work, gold ornaments, and numerous objects indicative of art and refinement; and various gymnastic exercises, the games of draughts, ball, mora, and other well-known modern amusements, were common at the same period.*

A series of figures in one compartment represents the exercise of the several mechanic trades; while in another we discover, in a numerous group, the quaint and formal order of their feasts. Several of the representations of gods and distinguished mortals, introduced into their domestic pictures, are cleverly executed; and the costumes and private dwellings, though they convey no very exalted idea of the grandeur or opulence of their possessors, are depicted with much ease and spirit. The colours in which the whole have been painted retain not a little of their freshness. In the size of the apartments, the number of columns, the subjects on the wall, in short, in all their accidents and ornaments, these sepulchral excavations differ greatly from each other. In some, for example, the roof appears to rest upon four massive polyangular columns; in others, upon ten slender clustered pillars, painted, like the walls of the cathedral of Genoa, with alternate horizontal bands, which here are green and yellow, there black and white. These beautiful columns, resembling those we find in many Gothic structures, represent four lotus stems, bound together by fillets, the united budding flowers forming the capital. From these interesting tombs, which date so far back as the reign of Osirtasen, who expelled the Shepherd Kings from Egypt, and have been greatly defaced by time, as much as by the rude scratches of the Arabs, we departed reluctantly; yet not before we had scrawled our names by the side of many others, on a piece of unpainted wall.

Proceeding in search of the celebrated "Cave of Diana," on our way we passed the ruined village of Benihassan, which, in extent, appears to have fallen very little short of Minieh; and having crossed a deep rocky ravine, —the channel, in rainy seasons, of a furious mountain torrent,—reached the skirts of the modern village, to the east of which a path, turning off towards a wide lateral valley of the Arabian mountains, conducted us through the village cemetery, where a small mound of sand, which would be levelled by the first tempest, with an upright stick at one end, were all

* Wilkinson.

the sepulchral honours bestowed upon the dead; and, in walking hastily along through this humble necropolis, one of our party sank knee-deep into a recent grave. Turning a blunt promontory of the mountain, we entered a savage rocky valley, where, in many parts, the rugged summits of the cliffs overhang their bases, while the bottom has been torn up and rent into chasms by the action of tremendous rain-floods. In this dreary dismal gorge, the goddess Bubastis, if she resembled Artemis, the mountain-nymph of Greece, might well have delighted to be worshipped; for if sterility, solitude, and absolute desolation, afforded her contentment, she could nowhere have found a fitter residence. But, in fact, we had not yet discovered her dwelling-place. There were here, indeed, two or three natural caverns, in the wild rocks overhanging the torrent-bed, but none likely to have been dedicated by the Egyptians to the service of Diana. Suleiman, who had previously been at the rock temple, for some time ran about in search of it like a hound at fault; and, in the meanwhile, we explored numerous small excavations, formerly inhabited by ascetics, who sought peace and tranquillity of mind in such retreats as these. In one of the grottoes I observed a beautiful arched niche cut in the rock, and adorned on either side with an elegant pilaster. High up in the cliffs are the entrances to numerous other excavations, whither their inhabitants must have ascended by ropes or ladders; and in imprudently endeavouring to mount along the face of the rock to one of these chambers, I narrowly escaped being dashed to pieces. Proceeding onward to the second lateral valley, south of Benihassan, we discovered several large rock temples, with sekos, adytum, and other chambers, adorned with porticoes, pillars, paintings, bassi-rilievi, and hieroglyphics; and the most extensive of these, on the southern side of the valley, seemed, from its symbolical sculptures, to be the "cave of Artemis," having a far more ancient appearance than the northern grottoes, but differing not materially from the other cavern-temples of Egypt. Evening approaching, we returned across the Desert, and through numerous date-forests, to the banks of the river; and, overtaking our kandjias, continued to sail on by moonlight, with a favourable wind.

Next morning I visited a Sheikh's tomb, with which a curious, and no doubt very ancient, superstition is connected. The neat little edifice was picturesquely embosomed in a thicket of palms, mimosas, and other trees, overhanging the river. I found the attendant extremely obliging, and perfectly willing to admit me into the interior, though I wore my boots, and was known not to be a Moslem. There was, as usual, a small chest, neat mats on the floor, and two or three miniature boats suspended from the roof. The saint here interred is held in peculiar veneration by the mariners of the Nile, who, when no servant happens to be present, cast a little bread into the river for Sheikh Said. Our humble offering, instead of floating away with the stream, would, according to popular belief, remain stationary, and be found under the holy man's window on the morrow. It is not improbable, however, that the fish of the Nile may, in this place, be in partnership with the Sheikh, and entitled to receive a share of the gifts of the pious. Sacred fish have been worshipped in various parts of the world; and in the island of Cephalonia, off Cape Capro,

offerings of bread are still made to the species called Melanouros. The sailors, in casting them into the sea, make use of the following words: "Health, Cape Capro, to your wife, to your children; to you, Cape Capro, to your wife (making the first offering); to your children (making a second). You fish, Melanouros, eat the cake (making a third)." This is probably the relic of some ancient custom; the passage by the rock was a dangerous navigation, and the fish Melanouros abounds here.*

It has been said that the eastern chain of mountains, all the way from Er Rharamoun to Manfalout, comes down close to the water's edge, and is thickly perforated with excavations; but this is not quite correct; as a little to the north of the village of Sheikh Said, it recedes considerably from the Nile, and, having made a large semicircular sweep, again approaches it near Gherf. Beyond this village it once more turns off towards the east, leaving an extensive flat for cultivation, which extends for several miles towards the south. Up to this point there are few excavations in the face of the mountains, which slope away towards the Desert with an undulating, broken surface, without cliffs or precipices.

The weather, though mild, was all this day gloomy, the sun scarcely appearing at all, while low misty clouds rolled continually along the pinnacles of the mountains; yet the fields resounded with the songs of the skylarks, and the scent of wild flowers perfumed the air. Extensive plantations of sugar-cane, fields of wheat, lupines in flower, peas eighteen inches high, rich clover, &c., cover the whole surface of the country with a variegated carpet of verdure, exceeding in beauty the poetical descriptions of Fénélon. We expect to find crocodiles in the river about Manfalout; the flesh of these animals, which is eaten by the Nubians, has the reputation of being a cure for fevers.

Hamilton, by I know not what course of reasoning, was led to think that the sandy nature of most of the islands in the Nile, furnishes an argument against the notion that it is the mud of this river which fattens the soil of Egypt. But he would seem to have overlooked the fact that, wherever a new channel is formed round any portion of land previously rich and cultivated, the whole of the space thus severed from the mainland is very quickly, unless kept in cultivation, reduced to a mere sand-bank. This, however, is easy of explanation; for the river, in its efforts to move in a right line, attacks incessantly the shores of the island, loosening and carrying away the lighter soil, while the heavier particles remain, and are daily increased by the sands from the Desert. Afterwards, during the inundation, when the current is most irresistible, the whole surface of the island is lifted up from its bed, and hurried away by the waters, leaving the lower stratum uncovered. In many parts, even the regular banks, like the shores of the sea, are formed of yellow sand, which, in Nubia, is coarse and heavy, consisting of large particles of decomposed quartz, mica, felspar, &c.

At length, as we approach Manfalout, the eastern mountains assume a more sublime appearance, putting on the form of ruined castles, with

* Dr. Olin. Dr. Sibthorp.

terraces, turrets, and battlements of prodigious grandeur, and projecting their bases into the Nile, over which they frown, and tower to a vast height. In the face of the cliffs are innumerable grottoes, of various form and character; some preserving their original rugged features, others fashioned in the shape of temples, with porticoes, pediments, and friezes. Some are natural, whilst others are cut by the hand of man; and often at a great distance above the waters—the retreats of the Christian hermits, who treated Athanasius so kindly during his repeated exiles from Alexandria. We often sailed close under them; and with the glass I could see far within the dusky portals, uncrossed now for many centuries.*

In one of these, however, lives an old man, who has been there more than fifty years; and an old wife, his companion for more than half a century, is there with him. His children live in Upper Egypt, and once a year they come to visit their parents. The patriarch is still hale and strong; at night a light is always burning in his tomb; a basket is constantly let down to receive the offerings of the charitable, and few travellers, even among the poor Arabs, ever pass without leaving their mite for the recluse of the sepulchre.†

When, towards evening, the mist cleared away, the sky assumed that bright cerulean tint, which generally distinguishes it in these latitudes;—and the Nile, unruffled by the slightest breeze, presented to the eye a vast mirror, beautifully reflecting the overhanging mountains, pale and blushing in the light of the setting sun. This noble scene was succeeded by another, still more serene and beautiful;—the same landscape, painted in new colours by the moon. It is extraordinary that the ancient Egyptians should have been a quaint, unpoetical people, as Nature, however calm and regular, has crowded together, in the land they inhabited, all those physical sources of enthusiasm which are supposed to concur in kindling the fire of genius. The vast naked rocks of the Arabian chain, which, but a few minutes before, had been glowing in the setting sun, now stood like pale spectres in the moonlight; their bald and ghastly brow resembling that of a skeleton; while the river, broad, tranquil, of a deep azure tint, glittering with the bright images of the moon's sharp crescent and a thousand resplendent stars, displayed a still softer beauty than by day. In many places the shadows of the mountains threw their huge masses over its unruffled bosom; and on the opposite side, the low level shore, scarcely elevated above the waters, gave rise to a kind of illusion, the mighty river appearing to stretch away indefinitely towards the West, where every group of date palms or mimosas, upon the plain, seemed to mark the site of some higher island rising in the midst of the waters. But no powers of language can ever embody the surpassing splendour of this scene, or, perhaps, succeed in creating the belief that Egypt contains a picturesque landscape; though, for my own part, I have seldom been more powerfully affected by scenes of acknowledged magnificence; in the mountains of Sicily; in the beautiful valleys of the Apennines; or among the naked Alps of the upper Valais. It will, in fact, be conceded, that

* Lord Lindsay. † Stephens.

the effect of moonlight, falling upon a wilderness of white crags and pinnacles, with innumerable gorges, ravines, hollows, chasms, and cavern mouths, wrapped in deep shadow, partly concealing them from the eye, and giving rise to mysterious conjectures respecting their forms, is, in the highest degree, startling; as those who have traversed by night any of the loftier Alpine ridges will certainly have remarked. But in Egypt, the historical, and, still more, the mythological associations, clinging to every scene, especially when the mute figures of gods look down upon you from walls, and cavern mouths, and ruins, augment, in a wonderful manner, the effect of the natural scenery, and give rise in the mind to emotions which it would be difficult to describe. To enjoy this magnificent prospect, I sat under an awning on the deck, till the cold of the advancing night compelled me to retreat into my cabin.

It is everywhere a happy time for sailors when a favourable wind blows; but on the Nile it is the signal of especial joy. The necessary steps having been taken to profit by the breeze are scarcely terminated, when the merry-andrew of the kandjia, wearing a cap of jackal's skin, with many hanging tails, seizes hold, tambourine-wise, of a great earthenware vessel without a bottom, covered at one end with a tightly-stretched skin, on which he thumps with his fist while chanting a monotonous air. Another musician accompanies him with a double flute, made of two reeds, and remarkable for its sharp, shrill notes. This discordant harmony captivates during many hours the attention of the audience, who demonstrate their extreme satisfaction by performing *saffé*, as it is called, that is, by clapping their hands in concert. The sound of this national music often drew the attention of the inhabitants of the villages, who came in the evening to dance by moonlight on the bank, near our kandjia, and reminded us, by their picturesque appearance, of the primitive manners of pastoral ages.*

Suleiman, who, during his multifarious wanderings, had learned an infinite number of stories, and was naturally an excellent narrator, proved as good as a whole library of novels; and it was his custom, when the wind enabled us to sail by night, to present himself at the cabin-door, as soon as coffee and the chibouque had been served, and ask permission to relate a tale. This being obtained, he would seat himself cross-legged upon the deck, and projecting his dusky face, beaming with satisfaction and merriment, half-way into the cabin, would relate tale after tale, so ingenious, so new, so rich and mirth-inspiring, that, while thus engaged, day has sometimes overtaken us unawares. The Arabs, meanwhile, would generally be employed in the same manner, at a little distance on the deck; and at such times they always shared the coffee and tobacco brought in between every fresh narration.† Much of the pleasure derived from stories of this kind appears to arise from the

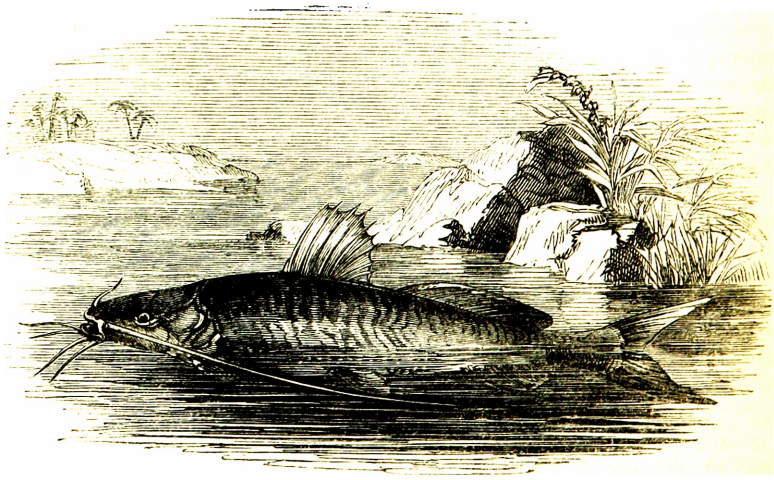
* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

† Most travellers have remarked the fondness of the Arabs for the class of fiction I have described. The Baroness Minutoli says: "I have often seen groups of women with their pipes in their mouths sitting round an old sibyl, who narrated some fable, which made their hair stand on end. They followed with their eyes all the motions of the sorceress with an expression of terror and astonishment, and did not breathe freely till the conclusion had answered their expectation."

firm faith which the narrator himself puts in them. Being ignorant of the bounds dividing the possible from the impossible, the most daring miracles, wrought by enchanters and magicians, offend him not. Sudden turns of fortune, examples of men springing, at a few hazardous bounds, from poverty to empire; princes reduced to slavery; cities, once opulent, inhabited by jackals and owls; and many other circumstances of a like nature, are spectacles with which the Orientals are familiar. Their favourite theme is ambition, which,—and not love,—is their ruling passion, young and old; and accordingly, they delight in picking up their heroes from the hovel, and conducting them, by paths paved with crime and slippery with blood, to a throne, where supreme happiness, they imagine, is to be tasted, in spite of remorse, whose stings are invisible to all but those who feel them.

The town of Manfalout, where we arrived late, is said to be less populous than Minieh, but appeared to be much larger and better built; and its bazaar was decidedly superior in appearance to any I had seen since leaving Cairo; the streets being clean and straight, and the shops neat and well constructed. Little novelty or splendour can be expected in the articles exposed for sale at a place so remote and unfrequented; but even bread, meat, butter, and the other necessaries of life, were not plentiful. The population is calculated at five thousand souls, among whom are two hundred Coptic families and a bishop; the houses of the inhabitants who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca are distinguished by a few sentences from the Koran written round a representation of the holy kaaba, painted in green or red over the doors.

Manfalout, situated on the left bank of the river, decreases in importance



Fish of the Nile.

every year. The Nile, as it changes its bed, has undermined the elevated

and friable soil on which its mud houses are built, and more than a third of which were carried away by the flood in 1829. The succeeding inundations, by no means so considerable, have made fewer ravages; but the foundations of a great number of houses have been laid bare thirty feet above the level of the river, and they cannot long fail to be swept away in their turn. It may easily be seen that the Nile, opposite Manfalout, once washed the feet of the Arabian chain, and that the fertile fields, more than half a league in width, which now stretch on that bank, have been left dry by it one after another in its passage towards the west. These lands, composed of fresh alluvium, are easily recognisable in Egypt, from the slightness of their elevation above the water-mark, and will only in the course of ages be raised by the successive deposits of the Nile.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

Crocodile Mummy Pits.

In the neighbourhood of Manfalout, among the mountains above Maabde, are those crocodile mummy pits, in an unsuccessful attempt to explore which, Mr. Legh, in 1832, lost two of his guides, and where, through want of due precaution, I was myself on the eve of sharing the same fate. That gentleman's narrative is as follows:—"We descended without difficulty. We formed a party of six; each was to be preceded by a guide. Our torches being lighted, one of the Arabs led the way, and I followed him. We crept for seven or eight yards through an opening at the bottom of the pit, which was partly choked up with the drifted sand of the desert, and found ourselves in a chamber about fifteen feet high. Here we observed fragments of the mummies of crocodiles; we saw also great numbers of bats flying about, and hanging from the roof. We now entered a long gallery, in which we continued for more than an hour, stooping or creeping as was necessary, and followed its windings, till at last it opened into a large chamber, which, after some time, we recognised as the one we had first entered. Our guides at last confessed they had missed their way, but, if we would make another attempt, they would undertake to conduct us to the mummies. We had been wandering for more than an hour, in low, subterranean passages, and felt considerably fatigued by the irksomeness of the posture in which we had been obliged to move, and the heat of our torches in these narrow and low passages; but the Arabs spoke so confidently of succeeding in this second trial, that we were induced once more to attend them. We found the opening of the chamber which we now approached, guarded by a trench of unknown depth, and wide enough to require a good leap. The first Arab jumped the ditch, and we all followed him. The passage we entered was extremely small, and so low in some places, as to oblige us to crawl flat on the ground, and almost always on

* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

our hands and knees. The intricacies of its windings resembled a labyrinth, and it terminated at length in a chamber much smaller than that which we had left, but, like it, containing nothing to satisfy our curiosity. Our search hitherto had been fruitless; but the mummies might not be far distant; another effort, and we might still be successful.

"The Arab who led the way, now entered another gallery, and we all continued to move in the same manner as before, each preceded by a guide. We had not gone far before the heat became excessive; I found my breathing extremely difficult, my head began to ache most violently, and I had a most distressing sensation of fulness about the heart. We felt we had gone too far, and yet were almost deprived of the power of return. At this moment, the torch of the first Arab went out; I was close to him, and saw him fall on his side; he uttered a groan—his legs were strongly convulsed, and I heard a rattling noise in his throat;—he was dead. The Arab behind me, seeing the torch of his companion extinguished, and conceiving he had stumbled, passed me, advanced to his assistance, and stooped. I observed him appear faint, totter, and fall in a moment;—he also was dead. The third Arab came forward, and made an effort to approach the bodies, but stopped short. We looked at each other in silent horror. The danger increased every instant: our torches burned faintly; our knees tottered under us, and we felt our strength was nearly gone. There was no time to be lost. Our companion, the American, called on us to take courage; and we began to move back as fast as we could. We heard the remaining Arab shouting after us, calling us Kaffirs, imploring our assistance, and upbraiding us with deserting him. But we were obliged to leave him to his fate, expecting every moment to share it with him. The windings of the passage through which we had come, increased the difficulty of our escape. We might take a wrong turn, and never reach the great chamber we had first entered. Even supposing we took the shortest road, it was but too probable our strength would fail us before we arrived. We had each of us separately, and unknown to one another, observed attentively the different shapes of the stones which projected into the galleries we had passed, so that each had an imperfect clue to the labyrinth we had now to retrace. We compared notes, and only on one occasion had a dispute—the American differing from my friend and myself. In this dilemma, we were determined by the majority; and, fortunately, were right. Exhausted with fatigue and terror, we reached the edge of the deep trench, which remained to be crossed before we got into the great chamber. Mustering all my strength, I leaped, and was followed by the American. Smelt stood on the brink, ready to drop with fatigue. He called to us, for God's sake to help him over the fosse, or at least to stop, if only for five minutes, to allow him time to recover his strength. It was impossible—to stay was death—and we could not resist the desire to push on and reach the open air. We encouraged him to summon all his force, and he cleared the trench. When we reached the open air, it was one o'clock, and the heat, in the sun, about 160°. Our sailors, who were waiting for us, had luckily a bardak full of water, which they sprinkled upon us; but, though a little refreshed, it was not possible to climb the

sides of the pit: they unfolded their turbans, and slinging them round our bodies, drew us to the top. Our appearance without our guides, naturally astonished the Arab, who had remained at the entrance of the cavern; and he anxiously inquired for his hahabedas or friends. To have confessed they were dead, would have excited suspicion of our having murdered them. We replied they were coming, and were employed in bringing out the mummies we had found. We lost no time in mounting our asses, re-crossed the Desert, and passed hastily by the village, to regain the ferry of Manfalout. Our kandjia was moored close to the town, and we got safe on board by five o'clock."

I give this story in Mr. Legh's own words, but cannot refrain from offering two or three remarks upon it. In the first place he and his companions abandoned the Arabs much too readily. No pains were taken to ascertain whether they were dead or not; and the story told at the pit's mouth to the poor native who remained there, put the finishing stroke to their conduct. Still, my opinion is that the guides only shammed death, and found their way out afterwards; but as the travellers believed otherwise, it was their duty to have made an effort to drag them out. Under these circumstances it is some satisfaction to think that they were hoaxed, and this is the conclusion at which Sir Frederic Henniker also arrived, though the mephitic vapour of the cavern be sufficiently deleterious to destroy life.

All that we had heard of the extraordinary dimensions, and wonderful conformation of these pits, of the dismal chasms they contain, and of the mephitic vapours and fatal effluvia which were said to interpose an impassable barrier between the traveller and the penetralia of the sacred crocodiles, had powerfully excited our curiosity, but we deferred our visit until our return down the river; when, landing early one morning, we proceeded to the village in search of guides and asses. The wife and son of the Sheikh el Beled, agreeably to their persuasion that all Europeans are physicians, had been already at our boats, requesting that we would go and see the Sheikh, whom they described as labouring under some violent disease. Though ignorant of medicine, and determined, for this reason, to sport with no man's chances of recovery—we, nevertheless, to oblige these poor people, who appeared to imagine that it was in our power to do good, accompanied them to their house; and, on the way, saw many proofs of the filth and misery in which they live. Passing through a number of dirty courts and alleys, we were at length conducted to the room where the sick man lay, extended on a bed upon the ground. I attempted to enter, but the chamber was so close, and the smell so exceedingly offensive, that I found it impossible to remain. The nature of the disease, however, could not be mistaken, being a rapid consumption of the lungs (the only instance I ever saw in the country), which had already reached the last stage. We advised the best means we knew for allaying the patient's sufferings; and, as he seemed to be amused by conversing on business, which afforded him a momentary respite from the thoughts of death, requested he would order some of his people to furnish us with asses. This he immediately did, at the same time fixing a price, with which the owners of the beasts appeared

to be content. Instead, however, of bringing the animals, they waited for us outside of the village, demanding six times the sum agreed on by the Sheikh. The poor man being ill, and unable to enforce the execution of his orders, we abstained from troubling him any further, and walked away; upon which the villagers lowered their demands, but, to punish them for attempting imposition, we refused to treat with them any further.

Crossing the plain from Sheghalghil to Maabdé, we found that the natives, as in the case of Sir Frederick Henniker, denied all knowledge of the dreaded mummy-pits; observing that the only two persons who could have conducted us thither were absent at Manfalout, where it was market-day. They moreover added, that several Arabs having perished in the pits, no person would now venture thither, and appeared to be afraid even to converse upon the subject. But their ignorance, as we suspected, was feigned; for, upon our repeated assurances that we would not require them to enter, but merely to show us the mouth of the cavern, several men consented to become our guides, though their wives, dreading lest they should be tempted by the offer of a reward to hazard the descent, crowded round, conjuring them to remain. The husbands, who had no intention of going beyond their agreement, endeavoured to silence their fears; but the poor creatures, not relying on these promises, still followed at a distance, with their children in their arms. Being unable, however, to keep pace with us in climbing the rocks, we quickly lost sight of them. Henniker, however, encountered greater difficulties, which he describes with much humour. "Provided," says he, "with Davy's safety-lamp, a long light stick, a thermometer, a plank and ropes, and accompanied by my dragoman and three others, I set out for Maabdé. In our way thither we met several Arabs, every one of whom denied all knowledge of the pit. Arrived at the village, we could get no information; it was evidently withheld; but at length promise of backsheesh induced a man to be our guide under certain conditions: 1. That he was to receive twenty-five piastres; 2. That he was to be accompanied by thirty of his friends armed; that we (five) were not to force them (thirty) into the cave; and that upon pointing out the entrance they might be allowed to run away: 3. That the dragoman (a Turk) should swear by the Prophet, by Mecca and Medina, that he would not only not force them (thirty) into the cave, but that he would not go in himself. To this he swore very readily—a Christian might go and be ——. While these conditions were under consideration, the news spread like wild-fire. Women and children crowded round us. 'What! go where my son died,' was the exclamation of a virago; 'if you fill my house with gold, my husband shall not go. He is an Englishman; he has magical incantations; and he is taking our husbands and children to certain death; the soldiers who went last week are dead there;' and many other expressions well suited to deter me. On the other hand, the force of my Arabic and argument was summed up in the word 'backsheesh.' Our guides, as if preparing for 'certain death,' took leave of their children; the father doffed the turban from his own head and put it on that of his son; or put him in his place, by giving him his shoes—'a dead man's shoes.' This treaty and ceremony lasted more than an hour; at

last we set forth with our *posse comitatus*, all armed. We had not yet cleared the village, when we were beset by women and children, who, with frantic cries and gestures, took up dust by handfuls, and threw it in the air; as yet, however, there was no harm done, for the dust fell in their own faces: we were still advancing, when a woman, brandishing a long staff, iron-bound at either end, stepped forward, like Hercules in petticoats, and placing herself between our would-be guides and us, made such a display of the *argumentum ad hominem*, that our thirty armed men positively refused to accompany us another step. I must confess it was a disappointment without sorrow, and we commenced a *retraite honorable*. Met by the governor of the village, on learning the cause of our visit, he asked if we would answer for our guides' safe return; being assured in the affirmative, he instantly commanded our men to lead us to the pit. We were followed by the cries and curses of women and children; the governor himself escorted us to a bridge clear of the town, and here forbade a passage to those whom we were far from wishing to accompany us. A broad smooth winding road leads up the neighbouring mountain; crystal grows on the summit like grass, and gives a novelty and interest to the scene, but there is not the slightest appearance of life; we entered a ravine, resembling the dry bed of a torrent. I was employed in culling crystal; when the guides ran ahead, and crying out, 'There—there it is; there died the soldiers, and there you are going to die'—they ran homeward with all speed. One of them in passing called out for backsheesh, which I offered, but he would not stop to receive it; there must then have been some cause truly alarming; and such was the effect upon two of my boatmen, that they threw down the plank, and would not advance another inch."

Of our several guides, one carried a large rope, by which we might let ourselves down; another, a jar of water; a third, a long pole. When we had reached the level summit of the mountain, it quickly appeared either that they knew not the entrance to the cave, or were determined not to point it out: in real or pretended search, they dispersed themselves on all sides; while we, misled by the descriptions of former travellers, struck off into a deep rocky valley, which in the season of the rains, conveys the waters of the sudden floods into the Desert. We had now entered upon that time of the year when the ardour of the sun's rays is extremely powerful in Upper Egypt, particularly in such hollows as this, surrounded on all sides by rocks, which, imbibing and reflecting the heat, convert them into so many ovens. From our experience of the taste of the Egyptians, it seemed extremely probable that we should here find the pits; and therefore, notwithstanding the heat, continued to follow the windings of the valley, at the bottom of which we observed several bitter-plants, in shape not unlike samphire, growing amid the scorching sand. Numerous lateral gorges branched off to the right and left, containing caverns, which, from the recent footmarks in the sand, and the bones scattered about the openings, must doubtless be the dens of wild beasts. Through the principal valley, as we judged from their tracks, the gazelles usually pass in great numbers on their way from the Desert to the river, to which they are compelled by thirst to descend nightly.

After pursuing our course for several miles, until we found the hills sinking gradually to the level of the desert, we despaired of success in that direction, and retraced our footsteps. All the Arabs, excepting one, had now quitted us; but on drawing near the entrance of the valley, we perceived another of the party, perched upon a height, coolly awaiting our return. He had discovered the mouth of the pit, and in about half an hour conducted us to it. Our first inquiry, however, as we had for several hours been tortured with thirst, was respecting the bardak; but we found that the guides, having drunk nearly all the water, had removed, and sat down on the rocks at a distance, leaving the almost empty jar by the mouth of the cavern. The entrance, very inferior in depth and dimensions to what we had expected, is a triangular hole, in shape somewhat resembling a crocodile's head, and may be about six or seven feet in length, by four in breadth, where widest. The depth, probably, does not exceed fourteen or sixteen feet. Impatient to visit the interior, I at once placed my hands on the sides of the pit, and leaped down; Suleiman and Monro followed; and one of the Arabs, observing us receive no detriment from the descent, likewise ventured in; so that our party now consisted of four. The effluvia issuing from the interior, however, exceeded in nauseousness all the disgusting smells to which I had ever been exposed. Men have been known to faint at the stench of a dissecting-room; but the smell of a dead body in the worst state of decomposition is sweet compared with the odious vapour which here made the very gorge rise.

Our tapers being lighted, we first groped our way through a low, narrow passage on the right, gradually lessening as we advanced, and at length terminating abruptly; it was therefore necessary to return. On again coming back to the mouth, we discovered on the left a very low, but much broader, entrance, through which we next advanced, and, after creeping along for ten or twelve yards, found ourselves in a spacious but not lofty chamber, with innumerable black stalactites depending from the roof. The Arab who accompanied us, having never entered before, was no better acquainted than ourselves with the secrets of the place. It was necessary to try every opening and fissure of the rock. Close to a very narrow and low passage, there was a square hole, like a window, much too small for Monro to enter; but it seemed possible that I, being considerably slighter, might force my way through, feet foremost: after thrusting in my legs, however, I found that my body would not follow. We next tried the passage; but this, after many turnings and windings, terminated in a small cleft in the rock, through which nothing but a serpent or a bat could pass. Again, therefore, we were forced back to the large chamber, where we sought in vain for any other hole or passage; so that, after continuing the scrutiny for an hour or more, we despaired of success, and returned to upper air. The Arabs, whom we found clustered about the mouth of the cave, seemed, I think, pleased at our disappointment; and by their subsequent refusal to show us the nearest path to the boats, which were moored near the mountains to the north of the plain of Maabdé, they gave us reason to suspect that they had purposely misled us, from motives known only to themselves. The poor man who descended into the cave, whose legs exhibited symptoms

of incipient elephantiasis, still remained with our party; the others, without asking for a present, left us abruptly to find our way how we pleased, and made towards their village.

Following a sheep-track leading towards the edge of the cliffs, we discovered a break in the rocks, through which we descended to the plain. In the face of the mountain are several grottoes, once perhaps the abodes of Christian hermits; and in a very perilous situation beneath a projecting crag, stands a Coptic convent of sun-dried bricks, with many windows, containing no monks; but on a certain day of the year, probably the anniversary of some Coptic saint, all the Christians of the neighbourhood repair to this convent, where they pass the day in feasting and rejoicing. On reaching the kandjias, we paid our guide and began to proceed down the river, but in less than half an hour, two Arabs were seen running along the bank, shouting loudly to us to stop the boat. Being accordingly ordered near shore, they were taken on board, and proved to be the guides to the crocodile mummy-pits, who, hearing of our unsuccessful expedition, had followed us to offer their services. They professed to be perfectly acquainted with the place, and promised, if we would remain until next day, to conduct us where we should find the crocodiles; for it was now evening, and we had been toiling during at least ten hours in the sun. As they seemed to speak with complete confidence, we resolved to give them a trial, and putting about, hoisted sail, and proceeded up the river to Manfalout. This was an extremely windy day; heavy clouds, towards evening, covered the whole atmosphere, and the sun set under a blood-red canopy.

On descending next morning to that part of the bank where our guides had engaged to attend us, we found them waiting; not two, however, but thirteen, all of whom had been attracted by the hope of backsheesh. Upon inquiry we found it was the favourable report of the poor Arab who had accompanied us on the preceding day, whose infirmity rendered him an object of charity, that had sent all these guides in search of us. An old man, with a white beard, who seemed to be the Sheikh of the party, said he had known the pits from his youth, and would bring us where we should find crocodile mummies of all sizes. We, therefore, desired them to proceed, being impatient to discover whether he would conduct us to the cavern we had visited on the preceding day; and, if so, in what way we could possibly enter. The point was soon settled. They took us to the same pit; and while we were undressing, and lighting our candles, those who were to enter betook themselves to prayer, as persons about to plunge into desperate peril. I again descended before the others, and as the smell seemed less disgusting than on the day before, did not in the least doubt being able to withstand the mephitic vapour, whatever it might be. When the Arabs had prayed, and stripped themselves nearly naked, we took each a taper in our hands, and began to move forwards. The old man, his son, and two other Arabs, led the way; my servant and I followed; and Monro came close after me, with a guide, who was to show the way back, should we find it impossible to proceed. Having reached the large chamber, where we had wasted so much time the preceding day,

the old guide turned to the right, and crept forward through a small hole, the mouth of which was concealed by a projecting rock. We all followed in the order we had observed in entering, and after proceeding about twenty yards, arrived in the large natural chamber described by Legh and Henniker, the latter of whom advanced no further. Continuing to push forward, we entered a portion of the cavern resembling the mouth of hell; enormous rocks, huddled together, forming the floor, where chasms of unknown depth yawned between the dark masses, while prodigious black stalactites, with shining spars of crystal, glittering between them, hung like dead snakes from the roof, and composed a kind of fretwork round the sides. Everything wore the fuliginous appearance of a place which had been the seat of some durable conflagration; black as night, covered with soot, oily, slippery, and exhaling a stench unutterably disgusting. Bats without number hung from the roof, or flew against our faces, from the countless holes and narrow diverging passages of the cavern: some striking against the rocks and falling senseless to the ground, where we trod or pressed upon them with our hands—for there was no time to be nice in picking our way. At length they began to cling about my neck, and bite my hands; and several times extinguished my taper; but this was merely disagreeable. By degrees, however, the passage grew low and narrow, so that it became necessary to creep forward on hands and knees, with our heads depressed, that they might not strike against the rocks. This position I soon found extremely painful. The heat, likewise, appeared to be insufferable, and the perspiration streamed from our bodies like rain. My companions, according to the advice of the principal guide, had stripped nearly to the skin: but trusting to my capacity for enduring heat, I had slighted his counsel, and now suffered the penalty of my imprudence.

Still, however, I continued in the track of the guide; but having advanced about three or four hundred yards, I felt the blood rush to my head, and experienced great sickness and faintness, accompanied by an extraordinary oppression of the lungs, greatly augmented by the odour of putrid corpses which issued from the extremity of the cave, and appeared to increase every moment. For this effect I never could fully account: in all the tombs and caverns and mummy-pits which we had hitherto entered, I had seemed to suffer less than any one, and could remain in them whole hours without inconvenience; but now the case was different. In a short time my head grew dizzy, and the cavern seemed to reel and swim round. Supposing I was about to faint, in which case recovery was next to impossible, I requested Monro, who seemed to experience nothing of the kind, to endeavour to creep by me, which the narrowness of the passage rendered nearly impracticable, and ordered the Arab in the rear to lead the way back; Monro and Suleiman proceeded. When I had gained that part of the cavern where it was possible to stand upright, the fulness and dizziness in the head abated; but my eyes had grown dim, and I fancied we had lost our way. The guide, who evidently shared my suspicion, paused, and surveyed the various openings with terror, while his trembling hands could scarcely hold the taper. The cavern, in fact, appeared to have enlarged, the passages to have grown more numerous, and the stench and blackness

more infernal. I moved along with the utmost difficulty, the bats flitting before or striking against me, and looked with intense longing for the appearance of light, and the smell of fresh air. A draught of water might, perhaps, have revived me; but the guides had neglected to bring any into the cavern; and to this circumstance I probably owe my extreme disappointment, and might have owed something worse.

As the way appeared so much longer than it had on entering, the suspicion frequently recurred that we had missed it; but at length I discerned a glimmering light, and felt the rushing in of the external air, which now seemed perfumed, though on my first descending, I had thought it execrable. On arriving at the entrance, the Arab flung himself, with a groan, upon the ground; and I, completely exhausted and overcome, sat below upon the rocks in a kind of dream, unable to climb the rocky ascent to the plain.

At the expiration of about half an hour I heard my servant's voice, exclaiming, "Oh! Mr. Monro, we are in paradise!" They all came out covered with dirt and perspiration, the Arabs bringing along with them the mummies of two crocodiles. For the description of what they saw after they left me, I am indebted to Monro. Another fissure, like the former, he observes, now received us, the sides being formed of large dusky-looking crystal stalactites, some of which were a foot, or even more, in diameter. It became wider as we advanced, and terminated in a lofty vaulted hall, apparently oblong, extending to the right and left; the bottom was covered with large pieces of rock, over which we made our way as we best could.

Suleiman directed me to look down between two of these into a pit, which he said was bottomless; but on thrusting in the candle, I found it to be about seven or eight feet deep. What may have been the extent of this saloon to the left, I was unable to state, my only care being to retain breath, and strength enough to reach the mummies; and our lights were insufficient to show the end of it as we passed. Our route now lay to the right, through a contracted aperture, which we traversed sideways, our bodies nearly horizontal, the rocks and the roof being in close contact, and presenting as it were a concave and a convex surface, corresponding with each other. Beyond was a small natural cavity, formed, like the others, of dark-coloured stalactites; out of this we turned short to the right, apparently in a direction towards the mouth of the cavern, and descended through a naturally-formed window to a lower level. Here the Hajji proposed that we should remain, while the guides went forward for the crocodiles. The heat was considerable, and the atmosphere unpleasant, but not suffocating; I was still well, and though I advised him to return, if it seemed necessary, it was my intention to proceed, while I might do so with prudence; he said no more, but went forward. The rest of our course was made almost entirely in a crawling position, the passage being a natural fissure closely hemmed in by stalactites, and in places very low, sometimes running in a serpentine line, and at others turning at right angles. After advancing a short time, I fixed my hand upon a round irregular substance; it was a human face; the chest and body were beneath

my arm. There was no time to examine it, nor indeed for any reflection beyond the "omnes eodem cogimur," which would occur to every one; I passed on. Not far beyond this, the old Arab stopped, and laying his hand upon another human head, pointed it out as a sort of landmark that served for his guidance in this subterranean navigation. The head and shoulders only were exposed, the rest of the body being concealed beneath an impending and projecting rock. Round this we turned short to the left.

Soon after, the passage became lower than ever, and we were reduced to the attitude and condition of snakes. The heat had considerably increased, and the air became more noisome. The stalactites were now of a jet black colour, and shone like pitch; and in the recesses formed by them were numerous human bodies; and some also were scattered in the track over which we crawled. Even the bats had not penetrated thus far into this loathsome dungeon; and though it was some relief to have escaped from their importunities, it was a warning index that the air was unfit for animal existence. Here, for the first time, I felt a slightly oppressive fulness upon my chest; and that I might feed scantily upon the noxious vapour, I breathed as lightly and seldom as possible; the inconvenience was of short duration, the aperture enlarged, and passed into a long and comparatively lofty cavern, where the air, though of the same quality, was more plentiful, and I found immediate relief. We had now reached the end of our wanderings; this was the mysterious depository of the crocodiles. It was an irregular fissure, of about thirty feet long from end to end, and eight feet across in the widest part; the height varied in different places. The pendent stalactites were of a shining jet black, and, when the candle was applied to them, burned and smoked like pitch; being thickly encrusted with a bituminous deposit, engendered, perhaps, by the mephitic vapours, which had reigned here for centuries: immediately opposite the entrance, which was near one end, lay a promiscuous heap of palm leaves, mummy rags, and human bodies: it was a scene which even the guides, as well as ourselves, mused upon for a few minutes in silence. Proceeding to the farther extremity, my attention was directed to a series of apparently small mummies, packed close together, and placed nearly vertically. Supposing them to be little children, I inquired of the guides; but was informed that these were the crocodiles, of which the upper part only was visible. When they had selected five, and extricated them from the mass, Suleiman, who had been silent for some time, observed that he felt his head swimming, and was unable to see; when I perceived that his eyes were closed, and that his head had fallen on one side. Immediately rousing him from his stupor, I ordered a retreat, which was effected slowly, as the guides were now encumbered with three of the mummies.

When the old Arab and his companions had breathed the fresh air for a short time, they again prepared to descend into the cave, in search of the crocodiles which had been left behind. They also offered to bring me, if I pleased, a human mummy; the Egyptians having in this cemetery mingled together the bodies of gods and mortals. This time they appeared to be absent much longer than before; but returned at length, dragging out along with them two more crocodiles, together with the mummy of a red-

haired girl, about ten or twelve years old. It was nearly naked, the flesh had shrunk to almost nothing, the skin was shrivelled, and as black as the pitchy rocks within; the head turned loosely, and trembled on the withered neck; the chest and abdomen were pitted in, the lips drawn hard over the teeth—ghastly, disgusting, horrible, like death.—I refused to take it away, and the Arabs laid it down upon the desert, where it soon became the prey of the famished and voracious hyænas, if they will devour a mummy. Though the crocodile was regarded as a god by the Egyptians, his body was less carefully preserved than their own. Neither coffin nor sarcophagus enclosed the corpse, which having been enbalmed, was first packed in palm leaves, disposed lengthwise along the body, and bound round with cord, formed, like that in use at present, of the leaf of the palm tree. The whole was then enveloped, like the human mummy, in linen bandages, sewn together with twine, and secured with broad tape. The entrails, separately embalmed and strung together in small bundles, were placed in the palm leaves beside the body. Two small oblong packets, placed over the empty sockets, seem to have contained the eyes; but these we did not open.

The origin of the appearance of smoke and the remains of fires in the crocodile mummy pits is explained in the following manner by the Arabs. A long while ago, as they relate, a great Moggrebyn magician arrived in the country with seven camels, and persuaded six fellahs to assist him in taking away a treasure that he knew of, promising to allow each of them to take for his share a camel-load of gold, and to be content with an equal quantity himself. He led his companions into the desert, and halted at the place where now is the entrance of the cave, and forcing by his enchantments the rock to open, sent the poor fellahs underground to fetch up the gold. Already six camels had been laden; but as they descended to fetch the burden of the seventh, the faithless magician kindled by his enchantments, an immense conflagration there, in which they perished, whilst he departed with the treasure. Since that time he has never been heard of; but during four years a thick column of smoke rolled forth from the grotto, and reached up to heaven. When at length it became possible to enter, nothing was to be found but the dried-up bodies of the unhappy victims of the magician's machinations.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

From Manfaloot to Siout.

Having listened to this story, I ordered the Arabs to take up the crocodiles and departed. It was a singular cavalcade; for the bearers, with their dusky and half naked-bodies, appeared themselves like so many mummies, condemned for their sins to walk upon earth, with their gods

* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

upon their heads. Of all these thirteen men every one, I believe, except the old Sheikh, had the forefinger of the left hand cut off, the stumps of some recently amputated, being still red and swollen. This horrid practice, resorted to in order to escape the army, must not be taken as a proof of cowardice among the Arabs. Like all other rational people, they prefer peace to war; but their principal objection to the Pasha's service, they say, arises from the disingenuous contrivances resorted to by the government to cheat them of their miserable pay. Perhaps they know that money sufficient to enable the Pasha honestly to discharge his debts towards them does not exist in the country; but this knowledge will not blunt the feelings of the heart, when they see the wives and children, from whom they are forced away, condemned to poverty and want, or driven to support a wretched existence with the wages of humiliation and vice. Numbers of young wives, thus abandoned, are compelled by starvation, or to prevent their infant children from perishing, to join the almæ, all whose profligate habits they must soon acquire. Such of their husbands, therefore, as live to return from the army, will in many cases find the wives and daughters whom they perhaps loved and cherished, irremediably lost: many families are thus entirely broken up. For, not content with seizing on part of the men, they frequently take all fit for military service. Such are the grounds for their disgust for the army. That they are all interested in emancipating the country from the Ottoman yoke, seems beyond a doubt; but this they cannot, perhaps, comprehend, or, if they do, the pressure of present evils forces them, in spite of this conviction, to curse the Pasha and his wars.

The system of conscription is still in Egypt as bad as it can possibly be. A superstition, hitherto invincible, opposes itself, it is said, to the establishment of any registration of births, the only means of establishing a complete control over the recruitment. It is inconceivable that Mohamed Ali has not sought to root out this pernicious prejudice, which has nothing to do with the doctrines of Islamism, and to re-establish an institution which has already existed in the country. Makrizi tells us, in fact, that the Khalif Maniya son of Abu Sofyan, established in each of the Arab tribes domiciliated in Egypt, a man whose business it was to take note of the birth of all children of both sexes, and of all other additions to the tribe. This person was expected to communicate, day by day, his information to the divan, or the military board, where were inscribed the names of both the new-born and the new-comers. For want of a proper system of registration of births everything, at present, in the matter of the conscription is left to chance. If a levy is demanded, the governors take upon them to divide among the villages under their command, the number of conscripts required; and they despatch as secretly as possible the irregular Albanians attached to their service to execute their orders by carrying off the required number of men. As soon as the presence of these agents becomes known at any place, the peasants take to flight, and the soldiers pursue them across the cultivated fields, which are trampled under the feet of the horses, and devastated in every direction. At last, after many expeditions of this kind, the number of prisoners determined by the

authorities is obtained. But in spite of the orders received, which are often enforced by the bastinado, the Albanians generally seize children, or old men, or persons unfit for service, who, being less active in flight, are necessarily first taken.

All the men captured by the irregulars are led in chains to the nearest town, where they are imprisoned until a medical man has examined them, which being done, such as are judged unfit for military service are sent home again, and it becomes necessary to supply their place: a new expedition is then set on foot, when the same persons are often retaken, subjected to a fresh examination and again dismissed. This ceremony is repeated at least twenty times before the number required is made up. Meantime the harvests are trampled under foot, the fields remain uncultivated, and often, when the people are at leisure to resume work, the season has passed, and all the labour of a year is thrown away. From this it may be guessed what an enormous sum each soldier must cost the Pasha, even before he takes his place in the ranks. It would be vain for the fellahs to refuse, under the pretext of having been formerly rejected, to follow the recruiting agents. The stick, and in case of need, the sword, are there to force them; and it must be confessed that the means of remedying this serious inconvenience is very difficult to discover. An attempt was once made to do so by giving certificates to those who had been once examined; but, in addition to the errors which this mode of proceeding naturally gave rise to, most of the agents were unable to read; and those fellahs also, who from their age and infirmities were certain of being exempted, made it a practice to give their certificates to their relations or friends, and conscripts became scarce.

Age and infirmity alone are the recognised reasons of exemption. Neither marriage nor a numerous family is admitted as an excuse, and six brothers have been taken away in one levy, all married, and leaving more than thirty persons without resources; they were pronounced to be fit for service, and were unrelentingly dragged away to the army.

Such is the love of the fellahs for the land of their birth, that they prefer passing their lives in a wretched mud hut, where they are continually in danger of death by hunger, to the profession of a soldier, and the expectation of being well-clothed and well-fed; and the horror they feel for military life is so great, that it is very common for them to draw out all the teeth of the upper jaw, and even to cast lime into their eyes, to avoid the conscription, to which they prefer even blindness—a calamity indeed so common in Egypt, that they may almost be said to be familiarised with it. Death has vainly been inflicted on many who have been proved to have voluntarily mutilated themselves. Recourse is still continually had to these means of preservation from a soldier's life.

When I reached Manfalout, the recruitment had just taken place, and the town presented the saddest possible spectacle. The wives of the unhappy men selected for the service wandered up and down, tearing their hair, and beating their breasts, and uttering piercing cries. Supported by their friends, who also wept aloud, they stopped before the doors of the houses

whose inhabitants they knew, and called forth the women to join them in their lugubrious concert. The day of departure was approaching.

About three hundred conscripts, tied two-and-two, were led out of the prison; their guards forced them with blows to take their ranks, and the caravan began to move towards the stream. The sad procession cannot be compared so appropriately to anything as to a string of convicts departing for the galleys. A profound silence, an admirable resignation, was the only answer that those unfortunate men made to the cruel treatment they received. The women rushing behind them, uttered frightful shrieks, imprecating curses on the head of the Pacha, and throwing themselves desperately upon the guard in order to embrace once more those whom they were not destined again to behold.

Meantime the chiefs of the escort, immovable in the midst of this tumult, gravely directed the march of the troops, without appearing even to be conscious of what was going on.

At length the banks of the Nile were reached, and whilst the conscripts were being thrust in crowds into the boats which were to bear them to Cairo, the shore exhibited a scene of indescribable confusion and despair. At length the boats set sail, and then, whilst the majority of the women, completely beside themselves, exhibited all the madness of grief, some more energetic or bolder than the others collected together, and began to follow on foot along the river; and, burdened by their children, set out upon their journey, without provision, without resources, and with the certainty of being decimated on the road by fatigue and hunger. Similar troops of women follow in this manner in the rear of each batch of conscripts to the camp to which their husbands are taken, and build up in its neighbourhood little mud hovels, where they live on the share that the soldier can set apart for them from his rations. Every one of the Viceroy's camps is thus surrounded by a still more numerous one, composed of women and children, among whom misery and vice, which is its consequence, soon make their appearance in their most hideous form.*

The Arabian mountains continue to follow their southerly direction; but as, in this part of its course, the Nile makes many extraordinary windings, we perpetually approach and recede from them. Near Siout, the Libyan range begins to increase in height, and projects considerably to the eastward of its usual direction, narrowing the valley, and adding a new feature to the scenery. The numerous islands, too, which divide the river into many smaller channels, improve the effect of the whole; for, on issuing from these narrow trenches, you appear to be sailing into a broad lake, bordered in several places by deep green woods of acacia trees, which cover for miles the whole face of the country.

In passing the village of El-Wasteh, I witnessed a little scene which, as it is creditable to the Egyptian character, I will describe at length.—Among my crew were two brothers, Ahmed and Mohamed, both young, cheerful, and playful as kittens. The latter the handsomest Arab I ever saw, was strongly attached to me, and repeatedly expressed his earnest

* Cadalvène et Breuvery; Duc de Raguse, &c.

desire to enter my service, and follow me through life. On approaching the village abovementioned, I observed them look sad, and at length Suleiman came to say that they wished to go ashore. As the wind was fair, and my companion, with whom I was to dine that evening, far ahead, I replied that it would be inconvenient to stop just then; but that we should shortly moor for the night, when they might take as many hours as they pleased. Nothing further was said, and the boat continued merrily to stem the current of the Nile before the strong breeze. In a short time, happening to cast a look at Mohamed, I saw him sitting sorrowfully on the deck with his head leaning on his hand, while the tears dropped like rain over his cheeks. His brother Ahmed, too, was nearly in the same mood, and both appeared to look reproachfully at me. I now, therefore, inquired more particularly into the matter, and found that their home was at El Wasteh, and that they had been desirous of paying a short visit to their father and mother, and other relations, whom they had not seen for nearly a year. Quite angry with myself for not making further inquiries before, and with Suleiman and them for not explaining, I ordered the head of the kandjia to be put about, and sailed back to the point opposite the village where they had first desired to land. I would not for the world have deprived them of a pleasure so natural and so delightful. They overrated the value of my compliance with their wishes. Joy and gratitude beamed from their countenances. They thanked me—they blessed me—they swore I was the best master in the world. I felt ashamed at not deserving all the fine things they said of me, and particularly at the refusal which my ignorance of their motives had induced me to give. But out of evil good sometimes follows. Had I not accidentally given a check to their feelings, I should never have known how dearly they loved their friends, and the place of their birth. To them, El Wasteh was the loveliest and most familiar spot on earth; but to me so little known, that but for them I should never have heard of its name. As soon as we were sufficiently near the banks they bounded ashore, and making good use of their heels, were out of sight in a few seconds. The bringing up of my journal enabled me profitably to employ the period of their absence. How long they staid I did not therefore observe; but at length Suleiman came into the cabin to tell me that the Arabs and their friends were coming across the plain towards the boat. Presently they arrived, and stood still, forming as striking and interesting a group as Father Nile had ever witnessed upon his margin. An elder brother, who had remained at home to comfort the old people, and aid in the labours of the field, first came forward, and presented me with a quantity of delicious dates. Then followed the father, a grave and venerable man, who, looking upon Nubia, whither we were bound, as an outlandish and barbarous country, earnestly recommended his sons to my care, and expressed his hope that I would restore them to him safe on my return. I promised to take the best care of them I could. Then came the parting. The mother and sister, who had hitherto kept a little in the rear, hiding their tears behind their hoods, now came forward, and throwing their arms round the necks of the young men, gave vent to their feelings. Nor was their love thrown away. Ahmed and Mohamed were right honest lads,

who, in the bustle and dissipation of Cairo, never forgot their homes, but treasuring up every para not laid out in necessaries, looked forward to the unspeakable satisfaction of spending their savings in the old village, under the shade of the familiar old palm-trees, and going to and fro weekly between their own cottage and the old village mosque, where they had been first taught to turn their thoughts towards God. I ought here, perhaps, to relate as far as I know of the sequel of the history of these young Arabs. On our return to Cairo, Mohamed, yielding to the spell of the European character, quitted the boat and his brother, and followed me to my house, where for nearly a week he slept in the eastern fashion at the door of my chamber, in the hope of prevailing on me to take him to England with me. When I reminded him of the above meeting, he shook his head and tears came to his eyes, but he did not alter his resolution; and when I said that in Europe we had no mosques where he could worship God according to his creed, he replied that he was sure I worshipped God myself, and that my way must be good enough for a poor Arab like him. He judged favourably of me, and I could not but like him for it; but looking a little further, I trust I resolved more prudently for him than he would for himself, by determining to leave him in the country and condition in which he was born. Nevertheless it cost me an effort, for seldom has Mohamedan clung to a Christian as Mohamed did to me. There is an old proverb which says, "Let every man praise the bridge that carries him safely over;" and this must be my excuse for feeling towards the Arabs as I do. I never met with unkindness or ingratitude from any of them with whom I had personal intercourse. They forgot all their religious prejudices in my case, and spoke to me of their wives, their household, and their faith, as though I had been one of them. If I am partial, therefore, to the race, and judge of it more favourably than most other travellers, it is because I met with a more cordial reception and more generous treatment. I should greatly pity the man, that, with my experience, could speak disparagingly of the Egyptian Arabs."

In the accounts which travellers give of Siout, there is of course as much variety as in their characters and pursuits. Some, possessed by the mania for antiquities, rush away at once to the caves and tombs in the mountains; others resort to the bazaars and coffee-houses; while a third class are happy to discover in the aspect of the place, or in the character of the landscape by which it is surrounded, a pretext for indulging in philosophical reflections. Mr. Stephens, true to his plan of chronicling minutely the events of his own journey, trots merrily into Siout on donkeyback, accompanied by a smart little Arab girl, whose appearance and circumstances were well calculated to inspire interest in her behalf. "Among the ass-drivers," says he, "who surrounded me the moment I jumped on the bank, was a beautiful bright-eyed little Arab girl, about eight years old, leading a donkey, and flourishing a long stick with a grace that would have shamed the best pupil of a fashionable dancing-master. By some accident, however, her face and hands were clean, and she seemed to be a general favourite among her ragged companions, who fell back with a gallantry and politeness that would have done honour to the ball-room of

the dancing-master aforesaid. Leaving her without a competitor, they deprived me of the pleasure of showing my preference; and putting myself under her guidance, I followed her nimble little feet on the road to Siout. I make special mention of this little girl, because it is a rare thing to see an Egyptian child in whom one can take any interest. It was the only time such a thing ever occurred to me; and really she exhibited so much beauty and grace—such a mild, open, and engaging expression, and such propriety of behaviour, as she walked by my side, urging on the donkey, and looking up in my face when I asked her a question, that I felt ashamed of myself for riding while she walked; but tender and delicate as she looked, she would have walked by the side of her donkey and tired the strongest man. She was, of course, the child of poor parents, of whom the donkey was the chief support. The father had been in the habit of going out with it himself, and frequently taking the little girl with him as a companion. As she grew up she went out occasionally alone; and even among the Turks her interesting little figure made her a favourite; and when all the other donkeys were idle, hers was sure to be engaged. This, and many other things, I learned from her own pretty lips on my way to Siout.

"This city stands about a mile and a half from the river, in one of the richest parts of the valley. At the season of inundation, when the Nile rolls down in all its majesty, the whole intermediate country is overflowed; and boats of the largest size, steering their course over the waste of waters by the projecting tops of the palm-trees, come to anchor under the walls. A high causeway, bordered by palms and sycamores, crosses the plain* from the river to the city, a comparatively unknown and unnoticed, but stupendous work, which for more than 3000 years has resisted the headlong current of the Nile at its highest, and now stands, like the pyramids, not so striking, but an equally enduring, and perhaps more really wonderful, monument of Egyptian labour. A short distance before reaching the city, on the right, are the handsome palace and gardens of Ibrahim Pasha†. A stream winds through the plain, crossed by a stone bridge, and over this is the entrance-gate of the city. The governor's palace, the most imposing and best structure I had seen since the citadel at Cairo, standing first within the walls, seemed like a warder at the door.‡ Siout has streets wider and cleaner than are commonly those of Egyptian towns, and it contains many fine squares, bazaars, factories, and mosques. In the centre is beheld a public bath, remarkable for its beauty. It was constructed at the expense of the Defterdar Bey, and the granite columns which adorn its interior were brought from Dendera. The profits of this bath go to maintain a mosque, also constructed by the Defterdar, and standing contiguous to it.

Of this pious member of the Geographical Society of Paris, a Frenchman relates the following characteristic particulars, which came under his notice during a visit to his Excellency.

"We proceeded," he says, "towards a kiosk that rose in the centre of

* Joy Morris. † Duc de Raguse. ‡ Stephens.

the Defterdar's garden. As we approached, piercing cries assailed our ears. They were uttered by a slave whom the Bey had condemned to be bastinadoed for having eaten the first fruits of some trees that had been sent to him from Europe. 'Let him die under the kourbash, the rascally glutton!' cried the Defterdar, on discovering the robbery. 'I will never taste the produce of any of those trees, but woe to whomsoever ventures to touch them. May the curse of God and of his prophet be upon him who ventures to disobey my orders!' In strict deference to the wishes of his son-in-law, Mohammed Ali, who has since become his heir, gave orders as soon as he obtained possession of the garden, that all the fruit-trees in question should be uprooted and replaced by others.

"A splendid flight of marble steps led us to the hall of audience. In the centre stood erect some thirty domestics and khawasses, armed with pistols, yataghans, swords, and silver-headed canes; there were also some irregular soldiers in their brilliant Albanian costume, mean looks, and chibouckis; and all the cohort of slaves ever ready to do the bidding of the great. The Bey was playing at chess with his khaznadar when we entered; but on perceiving us he left his game unfinished and motioned to us to sit down near him. Pipes and coffee were offered to us as soon as the first compliments had passed.

"Meanwhile the shrieks of the slave became louder and louder, and we could not conceal our emotion. We were, indeed, just on the point of opening our lips to plead for his pardon, when the Defterdar, making a sign to one of his officers, said: 'Put an end to that dog! . . . Don't you perceive that the screams of the beast annoy my guests? May I lose my title of hajji if the creature don't make more noise than an overloaded camel!'—He spoke, and all we afterwards heard was a few stifled cries—the death-rattle of the victim.

"The Defterdar was a fine old Turk with his crimson gold-embroidered robes, and the *kefyeh* negligently wound round his tarboosh. And yet, after we had seen him, we were doubtful whether we had seen a man. There was in the impassibility of his manner, in his slightly-flattened nose, in his long and bristling moustache, in the breadth of the lower part of his face, and still more in the restless and uncertain glances of his gray eye, something so remarkably savage, that he seemed the very *beau idéal* of ferocity—a tiger in human shape. 'Once more,' said the Bey, smiling, 'you are welcome; I am glad to see you; are you well?'—We responded to his polite inquiries in a befitting manner.—'What is the latitude of Paris?' he added. When we replied '48° 60′,' he took care to verify our answer in a thick volume which he had by his side, and then smiled approvingly upon us.

"After having expressed his great contempt for all who are ignorant of geography, he began a learned dissertation on astronomy, expressing at the same time his regret that the Viceroy had not caused some good French work on the subject to be translated. 'I know,' said he, 'that you are members of the Geographical Society of Paris, and I also belong to that illustrious body,' he added, with some pride. 'I have received my diploma, and in order to testify my gratitude for this piece of politeness, I

shall send to Paris the map which I have drawn up of an unknown province of Africa, conquered by me for my lord and father Mohammed Ali.' So saying, he signified to some one that the sketch should be brought.

"During our conversation a young panther, that we had not at first perceived asleep on a corner of the divan, advanced slowly and lay down close by his master, at the same time putting his paw upon one of us. At this piece of unexpected familiarity we could not restrain a movement of surprise. The Defterdar, who seemed to enjoy our embarrassment, gave us a mischievous glance. 'Are you afraid?' said he. 'No,' we replied. 'Why should we be afraid? Are we not with a friend?' 'Fear nothing,' quoth he, 'the animal is tame.' Saying these words he pulled the panther's whiskers, and the brute, by showing his long sharp teeth, and uttering a discontented growl, showed how little it relished this conduct. 'I am sorry,' proceeded our host, 'that I cannot show you the lion which I brought from Shendy; but a few days ago I was making him play with one of my mamlooks, who, awkwardly treading on the animal's toe, was devoured before my eyes. I was compelled, for my own safety's sake, to lodge a couple of pistol-bullets in his head. Poor animal—it was so very fond of me!'

"We requested the Bey to have the kindness to send away his panther, if he wished us to prolong our visit, and one of his khawasses delivered us from its disagreeable company.

"The map was at length brought in and displayed before us. It was a piece of cotton cloth several feet square, on which were sketched with considerable skill, although roughly, outlines of the course of the Nile, the frontier of Kordofan, and the names of the principal towns of the province. We complimented the Bey on his interesting performance, and offered to undertake to carry this gift to the Geographical Society; 'No,' said he, 'my map is not yet finished; I will make a more careful copy, which I will send another time.' Numerous stains of a doubtful colour were sprinkled here and there over this strange contribution to geography. ''Tis nothing,' said in a low voice the khaznadar, who had hitherto remained mute. 'Whilst his Excellency was sketching the map, the infamous assassins of the prince Ismael Pasha (whom may God have taken to his bosom!) were being executed under his inspection, and these stains are only the drops of the blood of those Nubian dogs!'" *

Mr. Joy Morris, the American traveller, while giving an extremely lively description of the Siouti Bazaar, and the mode of administering justice in this country, supplies at the same time a proof that he acted on the occasion in a very spiritless manner, which must have exposed him to the contempt of the Turks, though probably his error originated in ignorance. "Siout," says he, "is seated on a rich plain, covered with plantations of dates and orange groves. A busy multitude thronged its bazaars, among which were many Bedouins, from the great Desert of Sahara, tall stalwart figures, clad in burnooses, with muskets slung across their backs in the true Ishmaelitish spirit of distrust and hostility, and wearing a physiog-

* Cadalvène et Breuvery.

nomy of gloomy ferocity. Three of our boatmen had been robbed in the night of all their money and clothes. Failing to discover the robbers, they began to accuse each other, and we found a civil war raging among our subjects on returning to the boat. The reis begged us to interfere. We went with him to the governor of the place, whom we found in his court-yard, administering justice by the wholesale. The yard was filled with motley groups of Arabs, Bedouins, and Copts, who had gathered here to pay the miri or land-tax. Attendant scribes were registering the payment of the tax; and in another part of the yard, the *hoorbash* was falling thick and fast on the ribs of unhappy culprits. So what with the cries of the victims of the bastinado, the angry expostulations among the tax-payers and tax-receivers, the noise of camels and donkeys urging their way through the mass of people, for the road lay directly across the court-yard, and the supplication of beggars, who had been drawn hither by the jingle of piastres, the whole exhibited a most amusing scene of confusion. We presented ourselves to his Excellency through the firman of the Pasha, which served as a letter of introduction, and as an authoritative preface to our complaints. We were politely received, seated among his staff, and presented with pipes and coffee. After these preliminaries we stated the robbery, and our desire that it might be investigated and its perpetrators punished. His Excellency, who seemed to have a great relish for these things, immediately sent for the crew, and the people of the boats lying at the landing. Numerous questions were propounded, all of which failed to elicit any clue to the author of the robbery. This wise judge then turned to us, and propounded a very sound syllogism, whence he drew a very logical corollary. It was somewhat in this form:—Some one has committed this robbery; we cannot discover the thief, therefore he must be one of the crew. Upon drawing this logical sequence, he very quietly ordered the whole crew to be bastinadoed. It was in vain to attempt to refute such reasoning. The governor insisted that justice should take its course, and that whether our Arabs were guilty or not, a bastinadoing would not be unmerited, as they belonged to a race of scoundrels. The governor was a Turk, and, like all the foreign rulers of a subdued people, entertained a profound contempt for his subjects. This was the last time that we asked for the interposition of Turkish justice."

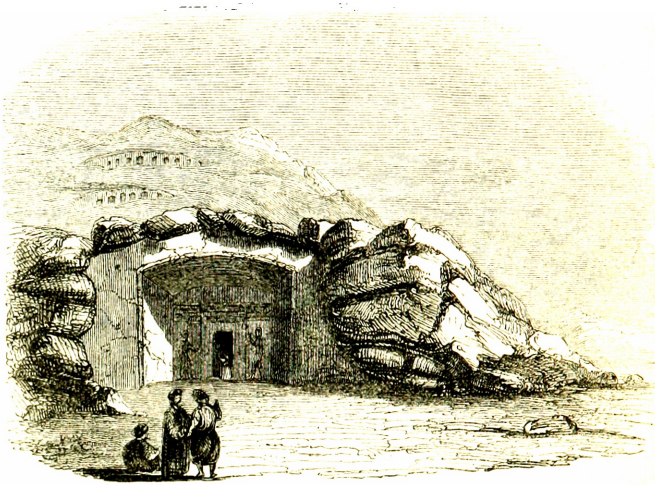
Lower down the Nile, Mr. Morris appeared to rejoice greatly in the honour of bearing about the American flag, which he tells us he set up on the top of the Great Pyramid instead of the union-jack, which he found floating there; but here, when a legitimate occasion offered itself for appealing to the protection of his stripes and stars, he suddenly forgot the influence of his country's emblem, and suffered the unhappy Arabs, who expected protection from him, to be cruelly bastinadoed by an unfeeling Turk. For myself, though I hoisted no flag on my boat, I never permitted a single Arab under my protection to be touched by governor or kashef. It was always enough to say, that I was an Englishman, and that the boatmen were mine, and that if they were subjected to the slightest insult or injury, I would have the governor removed and punished, which, through the English consul at Alexandria, I could have immediately done. I merely

mention these circumstances, because of Mr. Morris's very foolish exhibition on the Great Pyramid. At Belianeh, where two of the governor's underlings assaulted my reis, the only one of them that could be identified was instantly thrown on his face and bastinadoed, though the Turkish governor afterwards declared he had never for a moment supposed him to be guilty, and only punished him to oblige me. By way of illustrating the extraordinary principles which appear everywhere to regulate the conduct of the Turks in affairs of justice, I will here relate an anecdote, the scene of which is laid in another part of the Ottoman empire.

"One day, the Pasha of Aleppo, strolling alone and incognito through the Bazaar of Antioch, noticed a furrier who seemed in deep melancholy, and whose whole stock-in-trade consisted of a great quantity of fox-tails. 'What is the cause of your uneasiness?' said the Pasha to the merchant. 'Alas! my master,' replied the man; 'your servant has been cruelly deceived by an Armenian, who sold me these fox-tails very dear, assuring me that I should make a good profit by them. And now they have been on my hands for three months; I have not sold one, and I am a ruined man.'—'By the head of the Sultan,' responded the Pasha, 'I will put you in a way to sell them all at a high rate, if you will do what I command you. You shall not part with a single tail for less than three hundred piastres, and, Inshallah, in a few days you will not have one left.' The next day the Pasha sent orders to the corporation of Armenian merchants, requiring them to appear before him forthwith, and commanding them at the same time, under the severest penalties, that, as a token of ignominy due to their knavish commercial dealings, they should, all of them, wear a fox-tail stitched to their hinder parts. The furrier's shop was speedily thronged with customers, to whom he disposed of all his tails, at a very handsome profit; and he had the satisfaction of squeezing an exorbitant sum out of the Armenian who had tricked him."

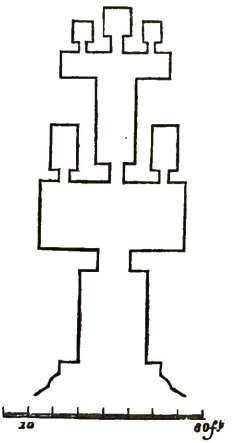
Quitting Siout, we proceeded to visit the tombs for which its neighbourhood is famous. The mountain where they are found is about as far from the city as the river, and the approach to it is by another stony causeway over the same beautiful plain. We left our donkeys at its foot, and following the nimble footsteps of my little Arab girl, climbed by a steep ascent to the lowest range of tombs. They were the first I had seen, and are but little visited by travellers; and though I afterwards saw all that were in Egypt, I still consider these well worth a visit. Of the first we entered, the outer-chamber was perhaps forty feet square, and adjoining it in the same range, were five or six others, of which the entrance-chambers had about the same dimensions. The ceilings were covered with paintings, finished with exquisite taste and delicacy, and in some places fresh as if just executed; and on the walls were hieroglyphics enough to fill volumes. Behind the principal chamber were five or six others nearly as large, with smaller ones on each side, and running back perhaps a hundred and fifty feet. The inmost chambers were so dark, and their atmosphere was so unwholesome, that it was unpleasant, and perhaps unsafe, to explore them; if we went in far, there was always a loud rushing noise; and, as my servant suggested, their innermost recesses

might now be the abode of wild beasts. Wishing to see what caused the noise, and at the same time to keep out of harm's way, we stationed ourselves near the back-door of the entrance-chamber, and I fired my gun



Egyptian Tomb at Lycopolis, the modern Siout.

within; a stream of fire lighted up the darkness of the sepulchral chamber, and the report went grumbling and roaring into the innermost recesses, rousing their occupants to frenzy. There was a noise like the rushing of a strong wind; the light was dashed from my companion's hand; a soft skinny substance struck against my face; and thousands of bats, wild with fright, came whizzing forth from every part of the tomb to the only avenue of escape. We threw ourselves down, and allowed the ugly frightened birds to pass over us, and then hurried out ourselves. For a moment I felt guilty; the beastly birds, driven to the light of day, were dazzled by the glorious sun, and flying and whirling blindly about, were dashing themselves against the rocky side of the mountain, and falling dead at its base. Cured of all wish to explore very deeply, but at the same time relieved from all fears, we continued going from tomb to tomb, looking at the pictures on the walls, endeavouring to make out the details, admiring the beauty and freshness of the colours, and speculating upon the mysterious hieroglyphics which mocked our feeble knowledge. We were in one of the last when we were startled by a noise different from any we had yet heard; and from



Plan of the Tomb at Lycopolis.

the door leading to the dark recesses within, foaming, roaring, and gnashing his teeth, out ran an enormous wolf; close upon his heels, in hot pursuit, came another,—and almost at the door of the tomb, they grappled, fought, growled fearfully, rolled over, and again the first broke loose and fled; another chase along the side of the mountain; another grapple, a fierce and desperate struggle, and they rolled over the side, and we lost sight of them. The whole affair had been so sudden, the scene so stirring, and the interest so keen, that my man and I had stood like statues, our whole souls thrown into our eyes, and following the movements of the furious beasts.*

Lord Lindsay thus describes the "Stahl Antar," so called after the far-famed Lover of Ibla:—"A lofty archway leads you into a hall of noble proportions, once most elaborately ornamented with hieroglyphics on the walls, and the richest tracery on the ceiling, flowers and diamond-shaped devices, of different patterns and colours, succeeding each other in parallel rows; they are now much defaced, and, from the description a Danish traveller of last century gives of them, must have suffered much during the last hundred years. Great pains seem to have been taken with this chamber; we found in none of the others such elaborate ornament or such beautiful proportions." These vast excavations have very properly obtained the name of "Cities of the Dead." All the population of Egypt, rational and irrational, converted into mummies, might conveniently be laid up here, the catacombs being endless in number, and in many cases of prodigious extent. Originally the greater number, perhaps, were quarries; but in extracting the stones for raising habitations for their living bodies, those prudent people were not unmindful that they must shortly stand in need of another house, to be tenanted for a much longer period. They therefore worked their quarries with this double view. Every block removed made room for a coffin, and two dwellings were formed at once.

Toward the extremity of a spacious corridor is a narrow niche in the southern wall, containing a pit like the well of the Great Pyramid. Casting in a stone for the purpose of ascertaining its depth, we heard it rolling first in one direction, then in another, until the noise became faint through distance, like the reverberations of an echo dying away among the mountains; so that, apparently, the excavation has been carried down in a zigzag manner to a prodigious depth. The natives, in their way of speaking, pronounce it to be without bottom; and relate a story of an Arab, who, descending by a rope in search of a traveller's dog to a great depth, at length despaired of success and returned, though several dollars were offered for the recovery of the animal,—a sum which would tempt an Arab to hazard his life in a thousand ways. Into this pit we were desirous of making a descent; but our guides having come unprovided with ropes, the procuring of which from Siout would have occasioned great delay, we proceeded with the examination of the other hypogeæ. Some of these, as I have already observed, are immense quarries, extending very far into the mountains, containing huge rock pillars, and divided into numerous apartments; while others are entirely open, and as large as Westminster Hall,

* Stephens.

though nearly filled up with rubbish. In many the pillars have been broken away, fragments of the shafts being left; in others we found long dark passages, leading through the heart of the rock from one suite of chambers to another; square apertures, letting down light from the terraces above; pits excavated in the floor; niches, recesses, chapels; winding, sloping, narrow corridors, intersecting each other, branching in various directions, confounding all recollection of the localities, and apparently rendering a return into the light doubtful. Numbers of these galleries are now choked up with fallen rocks, and others are so much straitened, that we forced our way through them with great difficulty. From the lofty terraces, extending along the face of the mountain in front of the excavations, we commanded a magnificent view of the plain of Siout, equalling that of Abydos in riches and fertility, and greatly surpassing that of Thebes. The component parts of the landscape, however, were nearly the same,—corn-fields, scattered woods, cities and villages, a mighty river, with ranges of rocky, precipitous, barren mountains, extending like huge fortifications round the plain, and closing the view on all sides.

To the gazelles, which are extremely numerous in the deserts west of Siout, the tombs of the Egyptians now furnish a retreat during the night; for where the floor was strewed with sand, I observed their tracks and lairs.

From the catacombs we descended to the plain, where a fine wide road, level as a gravel walk, leads along the foot of the mountains towards the capital, of whose extent and general appearance we could form a tolerably just idea from the mouth of the tombs above. It is a place of considerable extent, nearly circular, and surrounded by spacious gardens. The houses are neat and well-built, and the streets much cleaner than ordinary. In all Oriental cities we may form an estimate of the condition of the inhabitants, approximating very nearly to the truth, by carefully observing the shops and the bazaar, with the appearance of the persons who frequent them, or expose their merchandise there.

The bazaar of Siout is large, and tolerably well supplied with the ordinary articles of food and clothing. It was, moreover, well frequented, and men and women trod in many places so closely on each other's heels, that more than one fine lady, as in the story of "Ardashir," seemed likely to lose her slippers in the crowd. Among the vegetables of the season, we observed very excellent beans and cauliflowers; and the earliest fruit of the year was *nebk*, or lotus, which is produced in great abundance in the gardens of Siout. The *rhamnus lotus* is a large beautiful tree, with a small dark green leaf, like that of the olive. Its fruit, of a slightly yellow or pale straw colour, with a few small streaks of red on the sunny side, resembles an unripe cherry, though inferior in taste, and much less juicy, having somewhat the flavour of an insipid apple, though by care and cultivation it might, perhaps, be rendered a fine fruit. This has been supposed to be the marvellous lotus described by Homer,

> "Which whoso tastes
> Insatiate riots in the sweet repast;
> Nor other home, nor other care intends,
> But quits his house, his country, and his friends!"

But the lotus, whose taste could make a man forget his home—it must be a strange fruit that could do this—unquestionably possessed properties extremely different from those we ate at Siout; and, if it was anything beyond a mere poetical creation, may have been the *padma*, that mystic flower which acts so conspicuous a part in the mythologies of India and Egypt.

CHAPTER XXIX.

From Siout to Abydos.

In England, I always thought it pleasant to stroll through the country on Sunday, when the general cessation from labour appears to diffuse over the faces of the peasantry an air of cheerfulness and thankfulness, closely allied to the more enlivening influences of religion. The Mohammedan of Egypt, who does not keep his own Sabbath, cannot, of course, be expected to observe ours; nevertheless, old associations caused me to imagine that the poor *fellahs* seemed like our own husbandmen, more contented and more happy on that day; and their habits in these remote provinces are so simple and primitive, that, in the Scripture account of the departure of Jacob from the house of Laban, his meeting with Esau, and subsequent adventures in Palestine, which I was this morning engaged in reading, it seemed easy to discover distinct traces of the manners which still prevail here.

The rural villages through which I continually pass in my morning walks, contain many objects for curious observation, which I have by no means exhausted, though I have entered and carefully explored a great many during this voyage. My visits are often made early in the morning, occasionally before sunrise, when a majority of the people are asleep. On these occasions I am always welcomed by a host of dogs, who are put upon the alert by the sight of a white face and European dress. The race is surprisingly numerous, the first yelp of the sentinel cur being followed in an instant by scores of canine voices. They rush towards me from all quarters, while the more timid or indolent are seen taking their positions on the mounds of rubbish which encompass the village, or upon the flat roofs of the houses, all barking in full chorus. They are a cowardly race. A brickbat or two, which is always at hand, is commonly sufficient to put this tumultuous array to flight, and still their uproar. If a fellah happens to witness this scene, he usually calls off the dogs, and then asks for backsheesh.

The first persons who make their appearance in the morning are women with large earthen jars upon their heads, on their way to the river for water. They do not wear veils, but cover their faces with the corner of their tattered robe, and peep at you with one eye only. Having performed their ablutions, which extend to the hands, face, feet, and legs, they fill their vessels, and return towards the village. They manifest the most eager curiosity, and often turn back to gaze upon the stranger! Next appear a number of men, probably of the devout sort, going in the same

direction to perform their ablutions, and say their prayers. Having washed in the river, they reascend to the top of the bank, and bow down with their faces towards the tomb of the Prophet. When the sun waxes hot, the multitude come forth from their houses of mud into the bazaar, but in the largest number to the open spaces and mounds outside of the walls. Here, at the hour when the peasantry of other countries are going forth into the fields with their implements of agriculture, these indolent, degraded people, may be seen basking in the sunshine, sitting or lying on the ground. These masses of rubbish, where the heat of the climate, and the filthy habits of the people, have perpetuated the third of the curses of Pharaoh, are the favourite haunts of the fellahs—a sort of exchange, where they spend a considerable portion of their time, not, so far as a stranger can perceive, socially and rationally, but in yawning indolence or sleep.*

Beyond Siout, the Arabian chain again approaches the river, and becomes loftier and more precipitous; it often for a time retires from the banks, but soon again approaches them. Here and there are gorges, which allow gusts of wind to burst in upon the valley, and these, from the high temperature of the neighbourhood of the river, come down with prodigious force and impetuosity. The phenomenon here described exactly resembles the *bora* on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, at Trieste, and in Dalmatia, where it is the terror of mariners. In this part of Egypt the east-wind is very much feared; it blows in gusts, and all boatmen in approaching Kaoum and Tahta slacken sail, and redouble their caution.†

The Arabian and Libyan mountains, of which the former is still by far the loftier, after having diverged widely, and formed a broad semicircular valley, again approach each other about the latitude of Tahta. Large tracts of excellent land on the eastern bank have, in this province, been recently thrown out of cultivation, notwithstanding the numerous small canals which intersect the fields, and carry the waters of the inundation to the very foot of the hills; and these districts, unless quickly reclaimed, will soon form a part of the Desert. During my walk, I met several pretty Arab girls, with baskets of acacia charcoal on their heads, proceeding down the bank of the river, to dispose of their merchandise at the different villages. Men, too, were driving along camels or asses, laden with the same article; but these barbarians seldom carry any burdens themselves. Women, nowhere treated with the tenderness and consideration due to their sex, are in Egypt reduced to mere beasts of burden. Everywhere you see them moving under heavy loads; the cumbrous water jar, the rubbish basket, the charcoal sack; but, it should be observed, that, notwithstanding this, the Arabs appear in general to live very affectionately with their wives and female relations, whom, in other respects, therefore, they cannot ill-treat. Hard work, however, among the poor women, has much more to do than climate in bringing on premature old age, and I am persuaded, from several examples, that among the wealthier classes beauty is preserved much longer than is generally imagined.

*Dr. Olin. † Duc de Raguse.

In all this part of Egypt, but particularly about Katieh, much charcoal is manufactured from the wood of the acacia, which is here found in great abundance. Small quantities of gum-arabic are likewise produced by this tree, but insufficient for commerce; that which is commonly used in Egypt is brought from the black countries, or from the desert. The Bedouins, likewise, manufacture from the acacia immense quantities of charcoal, which they bring on camels into Egypt. There must, therefore, exist somewhere in the wilderness much more extensive woods than is generally supposed; since they have carried on this traffic from time immemorial, and always appear capable of proportioning the supply to the demand. The young corn, in many places, is not above six inches high. In the midst of the cultivated fields, I passed a sheik's tomb of spacious dimensions, with an elegant white cupola.

The *fellahs* appear to have but feeble notions of cleanliness, their clothes in general swarming with vermin, which they catch, and cast alive upon the ground, to be transferred to the person who next happens to sit near the spot; but they are certainly ashamed of the fact, for they hunt them by stealth, and not in the barefaced way observable among the common people in Italy. They seem, however, to be naturally industrious and active, though it depends upon the government to direct their energies into a proper channel. Even the ancient Egyptians, with all their boasted wisdom, in most of their great works, appear to have had utility very little in view—vanity or superstition being generally the moving principle. The result was splendid palaces, tombs, or temples, by none of which were the people greatly benefited. Canals, bridges, and great public highways, for the making of which no country can possess greater facilities, seem to have been always subordinate in their estimation to dwellings and sepulchres for their kings; the monarch, in all such governments, being everything, and the people nothing, excepting so far as they can be made to minister to their master's pleasures. And such, in a great measure, must be the sentiments of those travellers, and idle speculators at home, who, regarding nothing beyond the antiquities of the country, imagine that the dust and bones of the old mummy-makers are of more importance than the living multitude who now till the soil, and who, in their dhourra-covered sheds, and unsightly nakedness, are superior, in everything that concerns the dignity of human nature, to the superstitious and degraded rabble of the Pharaohs and Ptolemies. The old Egyptians laboured slavishly for their kings—the fellahs labour for their Pasha; and if history fable not, Mohammed Ali, with all his faults, is a much greater and better sovereign than many of those who in antiquity ground the faces of the poor in Egypt.

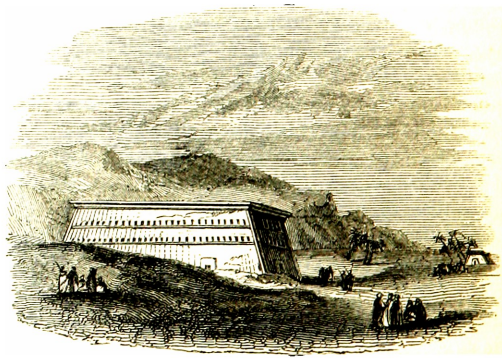
The Nile, a little to the north of Tahta, embraces many islands, and is as wide as a lake. We passed, without landing, the village of Gau-el-Kebir, the ancient Antæopolis, on the eastern bank, where no remains of antiquity are now to be seen, except the substructions of a few dwelling-houses in burnt brick, and part of a stone wall at the water's edge; the rest having been washed away. To this old habit of the Nile a contemporary poet thus alludes:—

"Even in my time the Nile hath made some head;
Despite the embankments and the jealous care
That watcheth him, or the rich offerings made,
He, ever and anon, among the groves
And gilded palaces that hide his banks,
Gives serious token he hath not forgot
His ancient reign, though men have clipped him in." *

The adjacent plain is supposed to have been the scene of the contest between Isis and Typhon.† There are many Christians here, and their place of worship is about three miles off in the Desert.‡ The situation of Antæopolis, on the skirts of a fertile semicircular plain, with high mountains behind, and the Nile in front, was highly advantageous; but the too great proximity of the river has been fatal to the ruins and the modern village, the whole of the former, and the greater part of the latter, having been undermined by a recent inundation.

Before arriving at the supposed site of Passalon, we arrived at Shendowee, on the western shore. The surrounding plain extends about four miles to the desert mountains, and is irrigated by a canal, that probably joins the Bahr Yusuf, near Benisouef. Having applied to the Nazir of Shendowee for horses and guides to the Red and White Convents (the latter of which is also called Amba Shnoodeh), he sent his nephew, some armed attendants, and a Coptic secretary, with whom I immediately proceeded. Such was the fertility of the plain over which we passed, that the crops were reaped in four months after sowing. They were extremely luxuriant, and quantities of cattle, camels, sheep, and goats, tethered in rows to long ropes, were depastured on all sides. The sheep, as in other parts of the country, were badly shaped, and marked with brown and white; but the cattle, and particularly the oxen, were very handsome, and fine in the horn. The best were of a dark brown, or of a cream-colour.

We crossed the canal at a ford, and arrived in about two hours at the White Convent, which is a lofty quadrangular building situated in the sands, at the termination of the cultivated ground, and not far from the mountains, where several ancient tombs have been found. The walls are of stone and have a projecting cornice. The door is very strong, and opens into a square cloistered court. The church is in the form of a Greek cross, and contains four arched recesses, surmounted



Deir Beyadh—the White Convent.

* John Edmund Reade, "Record of the Pyramids." A poem replete with sublime thoughts and noble sentiments. † Colonel Howard Vyse. ‡ Richardson.

in the middle by a cupola. The arches are rounded. The altar is of common stone, but appears to have been plated. The coved roof above it had been originally adorned with mosaics, and a wooden screen before it had been painted with figures of the Holy Virgin, of St. George and the Dragon, and of other saints. The whole is in a most dilapidated and dirty state, as sheep and cattle are brought into the cloister every night for security. It does not appear that much service was performed, although three Coptic priests constantly resided there. They invited me to take coffee, complained that the grounds belonging to the convent had been seized upon by the government, and that they were much impoverished; but as they had sheep and cattle, they must have had land for their support. They are, however, in a great measure maintained by the Copts, who live in considerable numbers together with the Arabs in the neighbouring villages, and who visit the convents on holidays. This building, as well as that which I afterwards visited, was well adapted for defence, and also protected by an Arab guard, said to be necessary on account of the bad disposition of the population, the Coptic part of which, it is to be observed, were exempted from the conscription. Several large mounds, broken pottery, and a few square stones, indicate the site of ancient buildings. On some of the blocks I observed hieroglyphics, and on one the remains of a triglyph.

The Red Convent was similarly situated, and built on the same plan, but had been constructed with burnt bricks, and appeared of a more recent date. The columns in the church were rather larger, and had something like Corinthian capitals, and in several of the architectural ornaments, particularly under the cupola, shells were introduced. The communion-table was composed of granite. The church was locked up and neglected, and the whole building in a worse condition than the other, and merely inhabited by a few Coptic peasants, with their cattle. Some mounds in the cultivated ground at a short distance from these convents, and at present occupied by an Arab village, are the only remains of Itfou. The ruins of Athribis are said to be at some little distance to the southward, but I did not visit them. I came back to Shendowee by a circuitous road, in order to pass the canal at an easier ford, so that it was night, before I arrived at the Nazir's house; whence I returned to the boat, and immediately sailed. During this excursion I witnessed a ceremony which was new to me: one of the attendants happening to meet an acquaintance, knelt down on the ground, and made several prostrations, as if at prayer. His friend did the same; after which they got up, and embraced with the usual salutations.*

A little to the south is the village of Rhäeineh picturesquely situated in the midst of the most lovely corn-fields and acacia groves, at the foot of Gebel Sheikh Haredi, where are two narrow ravines, with the appearance of deep water-courses, torn up and shattered by violent rain-floods. But the unbroken front which this interminable rocky ridge commonly presents to the spectator is exceedingly remarkable, appearing always of the same height, like a huge buttress supporting the pressure of the boundless table-land of the Desert. However, on ascending to the summit, you discover,

* Colonel Howard Vyse.

instead of a plain, the barren crests of other ridges extending farther than the eye can reach, as in the vast chains of the Jura and Alps. Near the village of Rhäeineh we passed a large boat laden with slaves from Darfour, and the other black countries of the interior, drifting down the river rudder foremost; and we saw the negroes, male and female, standing bare-headed in the sun, resembling so many cattle proceeding to a slaughter-house, which, in fact, northern countries prove to them, not excepting even Egypt, as they die there of cold by thousands.

The eastern mountains begin to present a change of feature. Instead of running nearly in a straight line, north and south, they, above Rhäeineh, fluctuate remarkably in their direction, now retreating inwards in the form of a half-moon, and now advancing again over the plain in sharp promontories, presenting to the eye a series of precipices of vast height, and perfectly perpendicular. Sometimes several of these promontories are beheld at once, obliquely approaching the river, like the termination of a series of parallel ridges; but, continuing to sail on, you successively discover the craggy curtains which unite these projections to each other. In many parts a succession of small wavy mounds of sand, like the section of a globe, rest against the foot of the mountains, and slope down gently towards the plain. It is true that for many hundred miles there is never seen, upon this dreary range, a leaf, a single blade of grass, or any green thing; but a thousand circumstances concur in removing the stamp of monotony. Sometimes you behold them lifting up their dark crests against the pale jasper sky, just as the earth receives the first tints of the dawn; then the sun, bursting up from behind them, covers their pinnacles with glory; anon they glow painfully bright beneath the fiery sky of noon; or are transformed into columns of turquoise and amethyst by the magic illusions of sunset. Such are the objects which, for many hundred miles, constitute the principal sources of interest to the traveller; for neither are there any ruins in this part of the valley, nor, after the edge of curiosity has been blunted, do the caverns and grottoes excite very powerful emotions. Nature, however, in these splendid climates is always beautiful. And when the monuments of Egyptian art shall all have crumbled to dust, and the site of Thebes be more problematical than that of Babylon or Memphis, Egypt will be still a wonder in itself, with its soil of inexhaustible fertility, its deserts and mighty river, which rises and falls with a regularity almost equal to that of the sun and moon.

Even the winds which blow over the Nile constitute a very remarkable natural phenomenon. At nearly all seasons we find them following or opposing the course of the current—a circumstance referrible to those two extraordinary ridges of mountains which, running parallel with the river, hem in the narrow valley. Excepting when the stream diverges from the right line towards the east or west, the voyager on the Nile is seldom affected by side winds; though, in some few parts of the valley, not yet sufficiently noted by travellers, sudden and violent gusts, descending from the Arabian or Libyan mountains, endanger his safety by overturning or submerging his boat.

The ordinary winds begin to blow faintly soon after dawn, and increas-

ing with the increasing heat of the sun, are most powerful about three o'clock in the afternoon, after which they gradually die away, and cease entirely at sunset. Thus they proceed, day after day, with little variation, though instances occur of the south wind's continuing throughout the night, blowing with unmitigated violence, or rising or sinking several times during that period. Occasionally, in passing a village, the traveller finds himself all at once becalmed, while the boats a little ahead or astern are sailing beautifully before the wind, which is caused by the numerous houses and the extensive surrounding groves that intercept and turn aside the atmospheric current. In consequence of this phenomenon, we generally begin the day with tacking, the morning breeze not being sufficiently powerful to enable us to stem the current; from nine or ten o'clock until night we trust to our sails, though, when the wind is faint, towing again becomes necessary about five or six o'clock.

In the course of this afternoon we saw the first crocodile, basking in the sun, on a low sandy island near the eastern bank; and shortly afterwards passed Soohaj, the ancient Crocodilopolis, a town of some consideration, with three mosques, whose minarets looked well amid the foliage of the date trees.

Stephens, *à propos* of crocodiles, has a good passage:—"While walking by the river side, I met," says he, "an Arab with a gun in his hand, who pointed to the dozing crocodiles on a bank before us, and, marking out a space on the ground, turned to the village a little back, and made me understand that he had a large crocodile there. As I was some distance in advance of my boat, I accompanied him, and found one fourteen feet long, stuffed with straw, and hanging under a palm-tree. He had been killed three days before, after a desperate resistance, having been disabled with bullets, and pierced with spears in a dozen places. I looked at him with interest and compassion, reflecting on the difference between his treatment and that experienced by his ancestors, but nevertheless opened a negotiation for his purchase; and though our languages were far apart as our countries, bargains sharpen the intellect to such a degree, that the Arab and I soon came to an understanding, and I bought him as he hung for forty piastres and a charge of gunpowder. I had conceived a joke for my own amusement. A friend had requested me to buy for him some mosaics, cameos, &c. in Italy, which circumstances had prevented me from doing, and I had written to him, regretting my inability, and telling him that I was going to Egypt, and would send him a mummy or a pyramid; and when I saw the scaly monster hanging by the tail, with his large jaws distended by a stick, it struck me that he would make a still better substitute for cameos and mosaics, and that I would box him up, and without any advice send him to my friend.

"The reader may judge how desperately I was pushed for amusement, when I tell him that I chuckled greatly over this happy conceit; and having sent my Nubian to hail the boat as she was coming by, I followed with my little memorial. The whole village turned out to escort us—more than a hundred Arabs, men, women, and children—and we dragged him down with a pomp and circumstance worthy of his better

days. Paul looked a little astonished when he saw me with a rope over my shoulder, leading the van of this ragged escort, and rather turned up his nose when I told him of my joke. I had great difficulty in getting my prize on board, and when I got him there, he deranged everything else; but the first day I was so tickled that I could have thrown all my other cargo overboard rather than him. The second day the joke was not so good, and the third I grew tired of it, and tumbled my crocodile into the river. I followed him with my eye as his body floated down the stream; it was moonlight, and the creaking of the water-wheel on the banks sounded like the moaning spirit of an ancient Egyptian, indignant at the murder and profanation of his god. It was, perhaps, hardly worth while to mention this little circumstance, but it amused me for a day or two, brought me into mental contact with my friends at home, and gave me the credit of having myself shot a crocodile, any one of which was worth all the trouble it cost me. If the reader will excuse a bad pun, in consideration of its being my first and last, it was not a *dry* joke; for in getting the crocodile on board, I tumbled over, and, very unintentionally on my part, had a January bath in the Nile." *

The river, increasing in breadth and grandeur as we ascend, appeared singularly beautiful to-night, on approaching Panopolis by moonlight. This city, now Ekhmim, stands at some distance from the river; but as it contains some remains of antiquity, which, from the importance of the place, and the remote date of its foundation, promised to repay our curiosity, we would not postpone our visit until our return, but moored close to the footpath leading to the town, in order to be there early on the morrow.

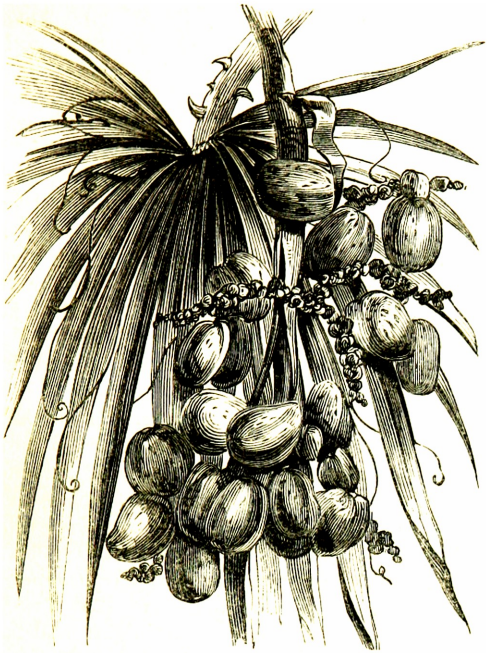
The Doum Palm.

A little to the south of this city we saw the first *doum* tree, or *Palma Thebaica*. When left to nature, its trunk is covered with a series of flat branches, which, winding round it obliquely, and lapping alternately over each other, appear like the squares of a tessellated pavement. These branches, however, being cut off, as they generally are, the *doum* has a smooth annulated trunk, which divides itself into several boughs, terminating in a large circular head of waving leaves. It is smaller and much less beautiful than the date-palm. The leaves are disposed upon the point of a prickly stem in the shape of a fan, like those of the *jagara*, so plentiful on the uncultivated hills in the neighbourhood of Agrigentum.

Proceeding onwards, we beheld, soon after sunrise, one of these magical

* Incidents of Travel.

scenes which the tropics and their vicinity, I imagine, can alone furnish. The mountains, cleft into numerous chains, and ascending in pinnacles of various heights, were enveloped by the haze of the morning; thick, heavy, and white in the valleys; more silvery about the summits, which, thus veiled, appeared almost transparent; while tints of indescribable brilliancy were diffused over the sky, and reflected from the river. A little to the north of *Es-Serat* we landed, and walked on towards the village, where the eastern plain is wide and highly cultivated. The Nile, flowing serenely, with many creeks, sharp inlets, and small woody islands in its channel, has the appearance of a beautiful lake, diffusing its placid shining waters among groves of date and doum palms, mimosas, acacias, and tamarisks, fringing its banks, and concealing its extent from the eye.



Doum Palm Fruit.

It was market-day at *Es-Serat*. The farmers had brought thither their grain, the bakers their bread, the fishermen their fish, and the butchers their *cattle*, ready to be killed as wanted. The sheep, which were feeding on fine rich clover, had the large heavy tails mentioned by Herodotus; which, however, resembled not the tails of the Cape sheep, small at the root, and increasing towards the point, but the contrary, being about eight inches in breadth at the root, and diminishing gradually to the end. These sheep were nearly all of a brown colour. Several of the cattle seemed to be of the Indian breed, small, and with a hunch upon the back like the Brahmini bulls. The market was held on the outside of the village, among the date-trees, at the foot of which the butchers slaughtered their cattle, permitting the blood to flow about for the dogs, many of which are seen lapping it up warm, close to the throat of the animal before it was dead. The head of the beast about to be killed was turned towards Mekka, and its throat cut with prayers, and in the name of God :—" Bismillah, ya Allah akbar !" One of the butchers we observed belabouring the body of a headless ox with a long stick, to make the skin come off the more easily. On

the whole, I never beheld a more disgusting sight; for the people assembled, of both sexes and of all ages, seemed to have monopolised ugliness, squalidness, and filth; and several of the men had the most truculent aspect, like that of certain galley-slaves I once saw at Mont St. Michel. Among the crowd were a few negro slaves, looking plump and contented; and a great number of one-eyed people, young and old—proofs of the existence and ravages of ophthalmia. I am surprised that the buffalo, which yields so large a quantity of excellent milk, should not hitherto have been introduced into England. In Egypt it forms the riches of the peasant.

I may here mention a singular feature belonging to most of the villages of Upper Egypt. Every cottage, nearly, is surmounted by an additional story, sometimes by two or three, occupied by pigeons.* These birds are seen in incredible numbers lighting on the fields and banks of the river, and at the approach of evening they hover over the villages in such multitudes, as to darken the air. Their houses are constructed of earthen jars piled up in the form of a wall, each affording a place for a nest. Vast quantities of the young are sent alive to Cairo and other markets, and they form an important article of trade as well as of food.

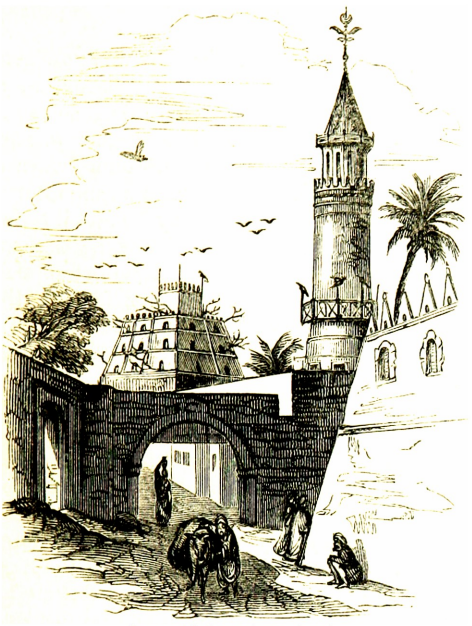
I have taken various opportunities to look into the interior of the habitations of the Fellahs. They differ but little from those seen in the Delta, and are not commonly more than eight or ten feet in length or diameter, for they are frequently circular. They are without doors or fireplaces, and often without roofs, the mildness of the climate, and exemption from rains, rendering a slight awning, formed of palm-leaves, a mat, or the stalks of doura, a sufficient protection. In many instances these materials are merely placed against the mud wall with one end upon the ground, thus forming a rude shelter, under which these poor people sleep at night, and take refuge by day, from the chilling winds which sometimes blow. The walls of these huts, as well as the roofs, are often composed of the straw of the dhoura, or of reeds. These materials are sometimes combined, and plastered with a mud cement. The better class of cottages have flat roofs made of mud resting on a layer of palm-leaves, or stalks of dhoura, which again are sustained by rafters of the palm-tree. They contain but a few articles of furniture. A bench, twelve or fifteen inches high, formed by a projecting part of the wall, supplying a place to sleep on. Even this is not very common, the floor of earth serving instead of chairs and beds, as well as tables. It is rather unusual to see the additional luxury of a mat of palm-leaves or straw. This and two or three earthen vessels for water and cooking, appear to comprehend everything in the shape of furniture. †

On returning to the kandjias, we saw a large crocodile on the eastern bank, standing on the sands, in the midst of a number of white ibises. Though quite out of the reach of a fowling-piece, he was terrified at our appearance, and immediately plunged into the river. Late in the afternoon we passed *Girgeh*, and pushed on to Bellianeh.

Quitting this place at an early hour, we proceeded across the country towards *This*, or *Abydos*, the *Arabat Matfooneh*, or "Arabat beneath the

* Duc de Raguse. † Dr. Olin.

sands," of the Arabs. Strabo's description of the palace of King Memnon which he visited eighteen centuries ago, excited our curiosity. Riding on hastily, therefore, anxious to behold the magnificent ruin, we directed our course towards the Libyan mountains, here of great height, and most rugged aspect, presenting a series of lofty cliffs, in many places perfectly perpendicular; our path lying over one of the richest and most highly cultivated plains in Egypt, now covered with luxuriant crops of clover, lentils, lupines, onions, sugar-cane, wheat, and about two thousand acres of beans in blossom; and these, which for a long way bordered our path on either side, were intermingled with a heavy under-crop of tall clover, undoubtedly the finest and most abundant I have ever seen. On all sides, as far as the eye could reach, arose the date-groves, in which the villages stood embosomed, and the farmers were everywhere busy in the fields. Perched here and there, on the ground or in the trees, were doves, hawks white and brown, which, from their familiarity with the other birds, would appear not to be carnivorous; large black eagles, resting aloft on the top of the highest palms; small flights of ibises, and innumerable sparrows and pigeons. The young camels were gambolling about, and here and there an old and stiff one, instead of supporting its character for staid and solemn stateliness, might be seen, free from the control of pack-saddle or halter, capering before his astonished comrades, flying before the wind at full gallop, or playing such antics as the ungainly form nature had assigned him might admit of.*



Street with Pigeon-house, Girgeh.

The buffalo, the horse, the cow, the sheep, and the goat, were feeding in groups among the rich pasturage, which having been drenched by the dews of the preceding night, heavy as those of *Hermon*, every leaf and blade now glittered with sparkling dew-drops. Scenes of beauty and fertility like this, involuntarily recall to mind those exquisite images which

* Ramsay.

Milton with so much taste and judgment has introduced into Eve's rapturous description of external nature:—

> "Sweet is the breath of morn; her rising sweet;
> With charm of earliest birds: pleasant the sun
> When first on this delightful land he spreads
> His orient beams on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
> Glistening with dew."

Scarcely could paradise itself be more delightful than the land now before us; the whole atmosphere being perfumed faintly, but deliciously, by the scent of many flowers, while every object which presented itself to the eye was clothed with inimitable freshness and beauty. The weather was such as we sometimes enjoy in England during the month of June, when the sun's heat is tempered by light clouds which alternately admit and intercept its beams. To enjoy it we slackened our pace; Abydos and its Memnorium were, for the moment, forgotten, and the beauties of the landscape were greatly enhanced by the buoyancy of my spirits and the indescribable delights of health. I could now comprehend why the Romans sent their consumptive patients, and the Turks their men grown prematurely old, to the banks of the Nile, for nowhere on earth could they, in winter, find a more congenial climate than that of Thebaid.

All this plain is abundantly inundated by the Nile, so that a few months ago boats might have sailed where we now admired the richness of the crops; but there is also a canal by which, when the river has subsided, water is conveyed to the foot of the desert; and we observed them raising it for the purposes of irrigation from small tanks. But one great cause of the fertility of Egypt is the extraordinary dew which, as in all countries where the atmosphere is generally free from clouds, falls during the night, leaving the earth drenched as after heavy showers; and to this circumstance the ancient Egyptians seem to have alluded in an epithet of Buto, or the clear starry night, whom they termed the "Mother of Dew." In about three hours we arrived at Abydos, and passing through the modern village,—that has nothing remarkable except the noble palm wood in which it stands—emerged into the desert, where numerous mounds of rubbish, burnt brick, broken pottery, &c., marked the site of the ancient city. Our guides first conducted us to a set of small painted chambers, evidently forming part of a spacious temple, probably of Osiris, whom, according to Strabo, the people of Abydos held in extreme veneration.

We next proceeded to the ruins of the palace of Memnon. The sands of the desert, accumulated by the winds of many thousand years, have entered its magnificent halls and chambers, and gradually risen so high that in some places they even conceal a portion of the capitals of the columns. This building, of a parallelogramatic form, three hundred and fifty feet in length by one hundred and fifty in breadth, is constructed, roof and all, of enormous blocks of stone, more resembling such as are beheld in Cyclopean structures than even those of the pyramids. Having walked about for some time upon the roof, now not greatly elevated above the surrounding sands, we descended through a passage on the western side into the great hall or audience chamber of Memnon. The roof of this

apartment seems to be supported—for the sand and darkness preclude all possibility of speaking with certainty—by thirty-two pillars, disposed in four rows, and surmounted by plain square capitals or plinths, differing in form from those found in other parts of Egypt. The diameter of the shaft is about four feet, and the intercolumniations two diameters and a half. The length, therefore, of the apartment must be about one hundred and thirty feet; its breadth about sixty-five. The roof is flat, and formed like that of the temples, of immense slabs of stone, extending from one row of pillars to the other. Around this great hall are numerous smaller chambers, all now entirely choked up, excepting at the southern extremity, where we entered through a break in the outer wall into an apartment of spacious dimensions.

It is not a little strange that what appears to be the principal front of this magnificent palace, should be towards the west, where all prospect is cut off by the lofty mountains, at the foot of which it is situated. Along the whole of this *façade* there appears to have run a kind of screen or colonnade, not connected above by a roof with the body of the building; and a still more remarkable feature in this portion of the structure is, that opening into the colonnade there is a series of spacious and lofty arched chambers, into which, perhaps, during the heats of summer, the inhabitants of the palace retired for coolness. Strabo, observing their construction from the pavement below, was led to suppose that the entire span of these arches was cut in one single stone; and Sir Frederick Henniker, who enjoyed the advantage of examining them as nearly as he pleased, repeats the assertion of Strabo. But the fact is not exactly so, for the stones upon which the arched block rests on either side, enter into the head of the semicircle, and form a part of the span. In the roof of these remarkable chambers we observed two small and nearly square apertures, descending obliquely as far as we could see; but what their use may have been, or where they terminate, we could not discover.

Having completed our examination we left Abydos, and re-waded the canal. The donkeys had eaten the bowels of our saddles, and left us the option of making use of our feet or their saw-like backs. We, therefore, walked; and it being quite dark, soon lost our donkeys and our way. There is no turnpike road in Egypt. The alluvial deposit of the Nile gives a new face to the path every year, like a new ploughed field. We wandered mid beans, wheat, and lupins, wet with a heavy dew, and the wind very cold. On a sudden we felt a warm vapour, as if from an oven. We were at this moment passing by the side of a mound; but there was no fire; we were sheltered from the wind, and the heat arose from the earth, which is like a hot-bed: hence it is that the verdure is of so beautiful a colour. The dews and winds are cold, and the birds consequently are thickly feathered as in more northern latitudes. After wandering for some time in perfect ignorance, the barking of dogs led us to a village; it was now so late that the rustic conversazione had exploded—even the sheikh had retired—and the two last of the party were taking leave of the dying fire. Though startled at our approach, they came forward immediately and welcomed us; one of them brought fuel, the other brought the lord of the village with his stock of bread, dates, sour oil, and buffalo

milk, already half way towards cheese; the bread is made of dhoura and lentils, and had it not been for hunger and hospitality I should have thought it bitter. We learnt that we were still as far from our boat as we were when we were at Abydos: the sheikh offered me his horse, but as it could not carry all our party, I declined it: in return for his attention, I desired the dragoman to pay him handsomely. He refused to receive anything; saying "it was charity, not calculation, that brought him to a stranger in distress." The dragoman forced a present upon him; and I then desired that the sum, whatever it was, might be doubled. The sheikh followed us to call off the dogs, and would have accompanied us to the boat had I permitted him; he gave us a guide, and commanded him to lead us by his sugar plantations, that we might help ourselves; his civility quite frightened me. I asked the dragoman how much he had given him; he said three piastres. I will answer, therefore, that it was not *more* than eightpence. I have often given double the sum for half the civility; and the sheikh would never have received half so much for tenfold his attentions if to a Turk. He had never seen an Englishman before, or the market would have been spoiled. One ought to travel in this country *in formâ pauperis*. We regained our boat about midnight.*

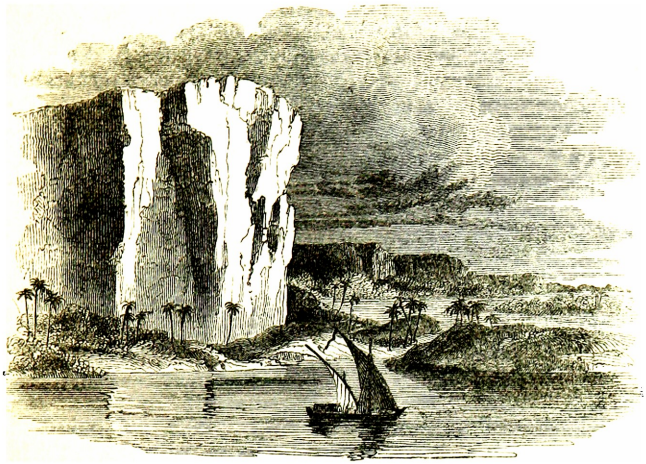
Soon after passing Havou (the Diospolis Parva or Lesser Thebes of the ancients), an abrupt bend in the river presented to our view one of the most magnificent landscapes in Egypt. The eye accustomed to the savage beauties of nature can never be weary of looking on such scenes. But the imagination, seeking, perhaps in vain, in the descriptions of the traveller, those distinguishing features that constitute the characteristics of a landscape, rendering it essentially different from all others, may possibly grow tired of the verbal pictures of them; since language knows not how to represent in colours sufficiently bold and glowing the sublime form which nature, in such regions, frequently assumes.

It was at this place that we saw an animal of about three feet long, basking on the bank, having an appearance between a lizard and a crocodile; the natives call it a "Wahren." It leaped into the river, and swam with its head out of water; a Nubian and myself pursued it—it landed and ran into a hole, or *cul-de-sac*. I placed my hand upon its loins and drew it out; my companion took off his shirt and enveloped it. In this manner we carried it to the boat, and with some fear and difficulty succeeded in fixing a cord round it and fastening it to the mast. It will make an excellent man-trap; not one of us dare approach him. A pan of charcoal was burning within his reach; he snatched a piece red hot from the furnace, and the more it stung him, the more savagely he bit it. Poor thing: I threw a pail of water over him, cut his throat, and flayed him.†

The mountains of the Arabian chain having made a wide circuit to the east, are seen a little above the ruins of Chenoboscion, running across the plain towards the Nile, almost in a right line; and having approached within about three miles of its channel, they suddenly rise greatly in elevation, and towering perpendicularly to a vast height, again sweep

* Sir Frederick Henniker. † *Ibid.*

round towards the east, presenting to the eye one of the most stupendous chains of rocky precipices in the world. The extreme point of this mountain promontory, the foot of which is nearly washed by the Nile, wears



Site of Chenoboscion.

from afar the appearance of a lofty Gothic castle, of prodigious magnitude and grandeur, with huge projecting bastions, and regular battlements, adorned all round, notwithstanding its vastness, with magnificent tracery; and the resemblance from a distance was so striking, that we were for a moment in doubt. At the foot of this colossal structure, more sublime than was ever raised by man, there runs a narrow belt of cultivated land, covered with rich grass, corn, and woods of *doum*, date, and mimosa trees, up to the very site of Chenoboscion. The wind blew with extreme violence as we passed these mountains, and my *kandjia*, which was going at an extraordinary rate, narrowly escaped being overturned. In the course of the day we saw several crocodiles,—as many, I imagine, as fifteen at a time; and among these there were some which could not have measured less than twenty-five or thirty feet in length. The balls fired at them appeared to rebound from their "scaly rinds" harmless as hailstones; nor did such as were hit seem to quicken their pace in the least when jumping into the river with the rest. Though the heat of the sun was greatly tempered by the wind, it still appeared to have more power than with us in July; yet, though bathed in perspiration, we did not find walking unpleasant, even in the hottest part of the day. Being eager to reach Dendera, and the wind continuing to blow without intermission, we sailed all night, and a little before sunrise, moored on the eastern bank, opposite the temple.

Though I had not retired until four o'clock in the morning, we were again stirring at an early hour, being impatient to visit the ruins. The greater part of the plain, east of them, is covered with a sort of sedge,

here used in making fine mats; which having been recently burned, was now springing up beautifully, rivalling, in appearance, the green corn, with patches of which the plain was interspersed. The modern village of Dendera, at a short distance to the right, is embosomed in a thick grove of *doum* palms; and many of these trees are scattered singly over the plain. Having proceeded about two miles from the banks of the Nile, towards the west, we began to enter upon mounds, partly overgrown with sedge, which mark the site and conceal the substructions of Tentyris. A little farther the sedge disappears, and we find ourselves among those confused irregular heaps of bricks, sun-dried and burnt calcareous stone, broken pottery, and fine dust, which invariably point out to the traveller the site of an Egyptian city. The path leading across the plain towards the ruins—and it leads to nothing else—greatly resembles that which, in remote parts of England, conducts you from some hamlet to the distant church—small and narrow, but well beaten by the feet of taste and learning. Here and there among the rubbish, you observe numerous excavations, made by the Arabs, in the vain search after treasure, or by trading antiquaries, who regret to find whole temples not portable.

At length a turn in the path brought us suddenly in sight of the most beautiful structure in Egypt, erected, as it well deserved to be, in honour of the Goddess of Love. From the first glance I discovered that the noble propylon, which a few years ago excited the admiration of Hamilton, had recently been visited by the hand of the spoiler; but although much of the front has been thrown down, and the stones either broken or carried away, enough still remains to justify the praises which a refined taste has bestowed upon it. I could not pause, however, to examine minutely this inconsiderable fragment. Hastening forward across the dromos, I eagerly drew near the façade of Venus's temple; and if I felt any toil or difficulty during the whole of my journey, the pleasure of that moment more than repaid it all. But much of the delight which, in common with many other travellers, I experienced at the first sight of the great temple of Tentyris, might be traced, both in them and me, to causes extremely foreign to the beauties of architecture, though we are apt upon the spot, in the hurry and confusion of our feelings, to attribute all our satisfaction to the irresistible effect of beauty and harmonious proportions on the mind. The fables of the mythology, delightful because studied when every thing is so, have consecrated in the memory of all educated men, the imaginary being who was here adored of old; and few are so steeled by their passage through the world as not occasionally to experience, when the scenes which feasted their boyish fancies, with all the bright associations that cling to them, are again instantaneously spread before the mind; some touches of enthusiasm, warm and vivid in proportion as the studies, to which they owe their birth, have been more or less pursued. Other emotions also have their influence. The pleasure of beholding for yourself an object greatly celebrated, yet seen by comparatively few, a secret reference to the ages it has endured; the fact that it has outlived the religion and the race for whom it was erected; that it remains almost

solitary in the midst of a city long ruined, as if the power in whose honour it was built, still protected its ancient fane from utter destruction.

Portico of the Great Temple of Denderah.

And what was this power? The same, I apprehend, to which the Pyramids were erected—Bhavani, Athor, Aphrodité, Venus: whose symbols were the cow, the lotus-flower, the cone, the triangle, and who, under different names, were worshipped throughout the whole Pagan world. Isis, in the conception of the philosophers, was a personification of Nature in general; Athor, of that principle by which homogeneous and congruous elements are attracted towards each other, and united for the generation of new beings; whence the universe is peopled with beautiful forms, which, under the influence of the primitive energy, successively transmit to other forms the imperishable essence of life, originally infused into them by Athor. Such, it appears to me, was the idea which the Orientals anciently entertained of Venus. The Greeks, when their fancy peopled heaven and earth with gods, conceived this plastic power of nature somewhat differently. Observing the effect among mankind, of beauty and a lively playful temper, they imagined a being

endowed in the highest possible degree with those qualities, and placed her on Olympus, among the immortals, to preside over the delights of gods and men, the perpetuation of the human race, and of everything which breathes the breath of life. It would appear, therefore, that the great temple of Tentyris was dedicated to the principle of Love, which, when combined with sentiment and affection, and divested of wings, all nations have embodied in the female form. And the architect who erected this fane, in the contrivance and arrangement of its several parts, in the capitals, in the sculpture, the distribution of light, seems to have had in view the awakening of a certain train of feelings, analogous in their moral character to those which are excited by the contemplation of living beauty. The cornices, the mouldings, contain the richest curves. The capitals of the columns consist of a woman's face four times repeated, which appears to smile upon you from whatever side you regard it; the sculptures for the most part represent scenes of joy and pleasure, religious festivals, processions, groups charmed by the sounds of music, figures reclining on delightful couches, and women, all softness and benevolence, with infants of different ages at the breast. On the roof of the *pronaos*, where learned fancies have discovered astronomical signs, we observe a mythological representation of the birth of the universe from the bosom of Athor, whose outstretched arms appear to embrace the whole expanse of heaven. From her mouth issues the winged globe, emblematic of the self-poised world, floating as if on wings through immeasurable space. Her womb also gives birth to the sun and moon, which, as soon as born, diffuse their light and generative influence over the whole of sublunary nature; while the other gods, with their stellar mansions, mystic symbols, transmigrations, avatars, and earthly representatives, are seen moving in order along the firmament enveloped within the skirts of her starry robe. She is, in short, that Remphah, "Queen of Heaven," with whose worship the Scriptures reproach the old idolaters; and every image in her temple at Tentyris, breathes of that voluptuous spell by which her votaries were bound, —

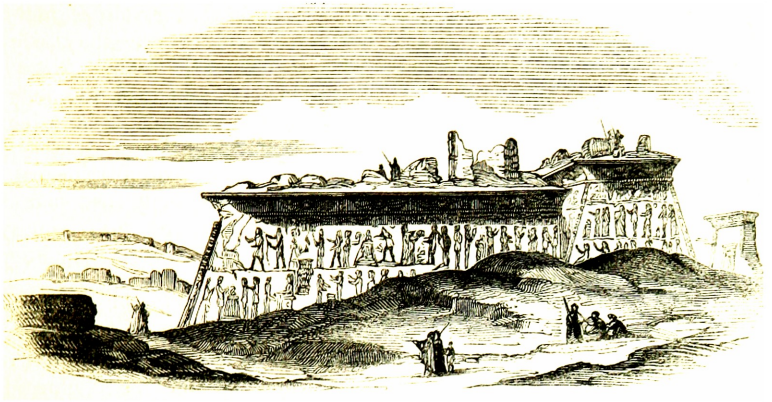
> "Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
> Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
> His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
> Of alienated Judah."

Such, unquestionably, appears to me the design of the architect; and, if this be the case, he has triumphantly succeeded in embodying his conceptions; the sentiments awakened in the mind of the spectator, though the religion of which they once formed a part be extinct, being precisely those to which he must have been desirous of giving birth.

On quitting Dendera, the "Enemy of the Crocodile," * I paid a visit to Gheneh, where I might have found much to interest and detain me, had I not been so near Thebes. As it was, I overcame as speedily as possible the obstacles to my progress, and in a state of most agreeable excitement set sail. To attempt a description of the scenes and objects we passed during

* Stephanus Byzantinus.

this part of our voyage, would be lost labour. To an imaginative traveller, minor ruins, like little stars in the neighbourhood of the moon, are quite invisible in the environs of Thebes. The wind, however, refused to



One of the Temples of Dendera.

second my impatience. I should have welcomed a hurricane, provided it would have blown from the north; but Boreas was that day in the humour to be gentle. It must have been the anniversary of the rape of Orithyia, when, sporting on the cliffs of Attica, the god bore her away in Elysian breezes. Towards evening I made arrangements with Suleiman for sitting up all night. Our little furnace was lighted, and our largest coffee-pot, in order to supply both master and crew, set to simmer upon the fire. I then drew out a box to the cabin door, where, under a mat awning, with a long jasmine pipe in my mouth, I sat down, puffing clouds of fragrant smoke towards my Arabs, squatted in indolent groups upon the deck, smoking like myself, or listening to some delightful story out of the "Thousand-and-One Nights." The moon, almost in its plenitude of power, gave us a paler day in lieu of that which had just died away in the west. Every object in the landscape was invested with indescribable beauty. We sailed, as it were, between two firmaments; for the Nile mimicked heaven so gloriously, that it was difficult to say whether the stars below or the stars above were the brighter. I got up in a sort of rapture of delight and looked down upon the constellations that, deep set in the liquid element, seemed to float away through the abysses of space at an infinite distance beneath. The river passed down with a calm flow like the blood of a healthy man in his sleep. The very ripple caused by the boat's bows, as the imperceptible upper current of the air urged us along, broke with a drowsy sound. As we moved right before the breeze, the huge distended sail, swelling gently under the impulse of the wind, if wind it could be called that filled it, looked like the mere phantasm of a sail flitting athwart the waters of a dream. The whole scene brought to my

mind Leigh Hunt's noble sonnet on the Nile, in which, with wonderful felicity, he says—

> "It flows through old hushed Egypt and its sands,
> Like some grave mighty thought threading a dream."

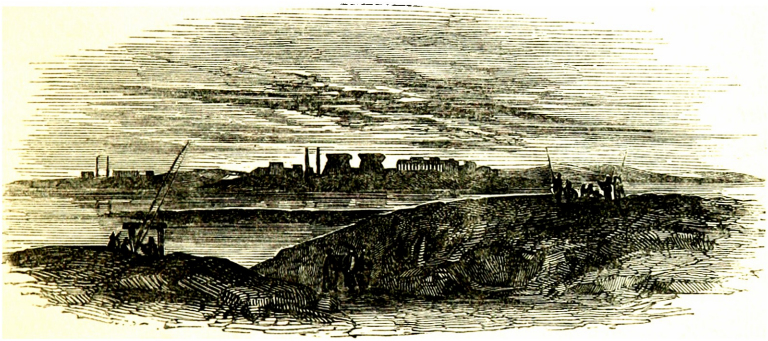
Hushed indeed! and never more hushed than on that *pretheban* night. Yet our little boat was full of life, so full that we seemed like the crew of some merry ark floating bodily through the regions of the dead. Ahmed, perched aloft upon the cabin, at the helm, beyond earshot of the story-tellers, hummed a boat-song for his own especial entertainment. The Arabs on the deck roared with laughter at the exploits of Shater Mansour,* or the Sleeper Awakened; while, half unconscious of their merriment, I suffered my thoughts to busy themselves with those long past days in which the mighty ruins we were approaching overflowed with a noisy multitude now converted into mummies, and exported, like merchandise, to all parts of the civilised world.

By degrees the chill of the night drove me into the cabin, where, with a finjan of delicious Mokha, emitting its perfume beside me, and an amber-headed pipe in my mouth, I gravely listened to Suleiman's relation of King Bibars' Dream. No story in the "Thousand-and-One Nights" is wilder. Magicians, jinns, efreets, enchantments, beautiful female slaves, marvellous turns of fortune, rapidly and confusedly succeed each other, and absorb the fancy. I should now strive in vain to describe the sequence of events, which flash upon my memory like the colours of a kaleidoscope —brilliant, dazzling, indistinct. I remember, however, one adventure in a garden—such a garden as the wealth of kingdoms only can create even on the borders of the tropics. Sultan Bibars, or Berber, as the story calls him, has dreamed a dream, of which, by the most bloody means, he seeks the interpretation, putting all those to death whom he supposes to fail. While things are in this posture, the youthful gardener of the palace, walking at daybreak among the plants and flowers which it is his duty to lend, is accosted by a lady of wonderful beauty, who invites him to clear up to Bibars the dream that troubles him. It would severely tax the most fertile imagination in Europe to call up before the mind anything so enchanting as the garden, minutely depicted to me by Suleiman, who excelled also in the delineation of female loveliness; the reader must fancy whatever is most charming in Oriental vegetation, arranged with unrivalled skill, mingled with artificial rills and fountains, and kiosks and aviaries, and bees in golden hives, and seats of jasper and chalcedony, piled with cushions of pink satin, and protected from the dew by fanciful roofs of embossed silver. But the lady whose marvellous beauty entranced the senses of the gardener, caused all the other works of nature to be forgotten. Her countenance, like that of Una, made a sunshine in the shady place; her voice too, sweeter than the nightingale's, rendered the hearer deaf to all other music. By this syren the gardener is tempted to undertake the interpretation of the sultan's dream, in which, through her aid, he succeeds, and rises to the rank

* This story, heard upon the Nile, I have related in the "Tales of the Ramad'han."

of wezeer, and marries the lady, with whom he lives happily, till they are disturbed by the "Terminator of delights and the Separator of companions."

Story succeeding story, with a few nods between, consumed the whole night. Just as the dawn was about to break, the captain came aft, and told me that the ruins of Thebes would be in sight presently. Upon this I desired him to put me on shore. It was a moment of indescribable interest. Up the eastern sky, slightly flushed with pink, the golden beams of the sun ascended with rapidly augmenting splendour towards the zenith, where the eye could observe them in the act of extinguishing the constellations. The summits of the Arabian chain, running high along the horizon in an undulating line, seemed to be bordered with an intense glory, as though they were kindling in the light of the morning. Lowering my gaze to the plain, I could perceive dimly, over the palm-woods, by the imperfect day now dawning upon them, the majestic masses of Karnak, sanctified by the mysterious influence of four thousand years, and rendered familiar to the whole human race by the glowing iterations of genius. I could not walk slowly along. I ran close beside the Nile, wholly absorbed by the mingled feelings of admiration and supreme content. I had attained the principal object of my journey: I was in Thebes. Its stupendous



Luxor

ruins were looming around me on all sides in the morning twilight. Memnon had not yet uttered his plaintive cry; but the twittering of sparrows, and the cooing of turtle-doves, and the shrill scream of hawks as they soared into the sky, expressed the joy of Nature at the approach of the sun. I, too, was joyous, and—shall I confess it—my pleasure was greatly enhanced by beholding, beneath the temple of Luxor, a very diminutive object upon the river, the boat of my companion, who had preceded me up the stream.

The ruins of this great capital, the earliest seat of the Egyptian monarchy, have in all ages deservedly excited the admiration of travellers. Excepting the Labyrinth and the Pyramids, the greatest works of its greatest princes were erected here; where the architecture, invariably aiming at

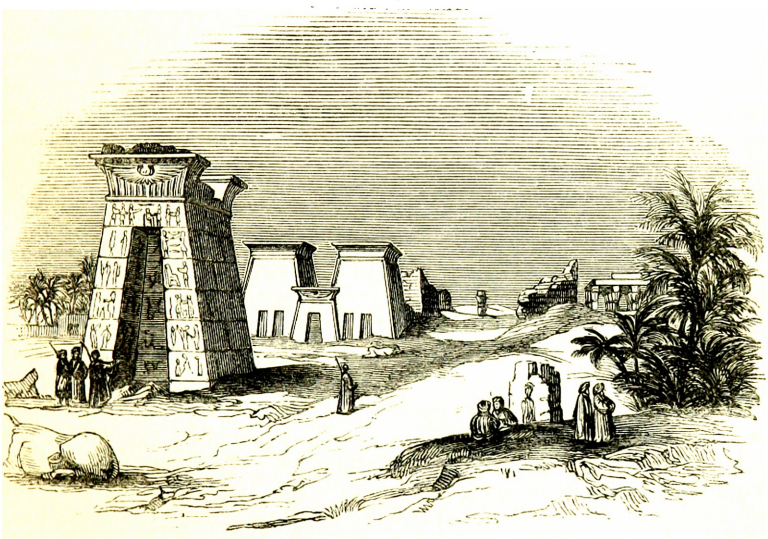
sublimity, has an air of vastness, of simplicity, of ponderous massiveness, which irresistibly strikes and elevates the imagination. This must be allowed. It may moreover be added, as a strong presumption in favour of its originality, that the impression left upon the mind by these monuments, is not transient, like the effect of mere singularity, but is recurred to, again and again, in after time, as a source of permanent satisfaction; a test which nothing but the creations of genius will bear. Inferior productions, to whatever department of the mimetic arts they may belong, always fail in this one essential requisite. Deluded perhaps, at first, by meretricious ornaments and a spurious manifestation of power, we admire and praise; but afterwards, when our cooler judgment has been consulted, the warmth we experienced, and perhaps exhibited, causes us shame; and the snare in which we were entangled, being regarded with contempt, we pass hastily to the antipodes of our first decisions.

When others, whose judgments we have esteemed and adopted, are found to stand in the above predicament, the conduct of the mind is not greatly dissimilar. Like most travellers who visit Egypt, I had read and admired the relations of the magnificence of Thebes, which enthusiastic persons had compiled, some in their closets, others on the spot. Above all things, the brief but nervous sketch of Tacitus, in his account of the voyage of Germanicus, dwelt upon my memory, tending to cast over those vast fragments of an antique age a solemn air of grandeur and perfection greatly beyond what, if viewed without pre-occupation, might perhaps belong to them. I will not deny that I arrived at Thebes with a mind under such influence; and my first impressions, as generally happens, were not unfavourable to the continuance of this feeling. Columns, obelisks, sphinxes, propylæa of gigantic proportions, colossal statues, mysterious sculpture, subterranean palaces, or halls of death, rendered doubly venerable by the marks everywhere left by the hoary hand of Time, and war, and barbarism,—all these picturesquely grouped, and viewed by an eye not unwilling to admire,—failed not to move powerfully, and fill the mind with images of gorgeous magnificence and costly labour.

But these hurried emotions subsiding, the love of Truth, whose naked majesty, more sublime than the creations of the architect, possesses, when we follow the real bias of our nature, charms so irresistibly pleasing, soon discovered its ascendancy, and left me free to exercise my judgment conscientiously. As my ultimate opinions differed materially from those of many other travellers, I considered it my duty to investigate the probable causes of this dissimilitude; and shall here venture to state the results of my inquiry. In every pursuit which men follow continuously and with eagerness, it usually happens that they ultimately invest it with an undue importance, discovering beauties and excellences which others, absorbed by different studies, perceive not at all, or in a very inferior degree. Such persons, devoted exclusively to their favourite subject, omit to make those discursive flights, those healthful pauses and diversions, those numerous approximations and comparisons, without which it is impossible even for the acutest minds to judge sanely. The greater number of Egyptian antiquaries stand in this predicament; and many, unbiassed by peculiar

studies, appear to surrender their judgments to the direction of others, by whose eloquence or assumption they are bound in fetters. Others, again, whose sole pretensions are based on their acquaintance with the practice and ordinary routine of the arts, presume, without any other qualification, to decide magisterially in a question more connected with the abstract principles of art, than with the traditional and manual processes in which the lives of such persons are consumed. Besides, the peculiar intellectual character possessed by different men must necessarily introduce much variety into their decisions. And thus, ruined structures, the sight of which has caused in some travellers extraordinary raptures and ecstacies, from whose influence they seem never to have escaped, may produce on others effects far less marvellous.

The merit of a work of art consists in fulfilling the design with which it



View of Karnac.

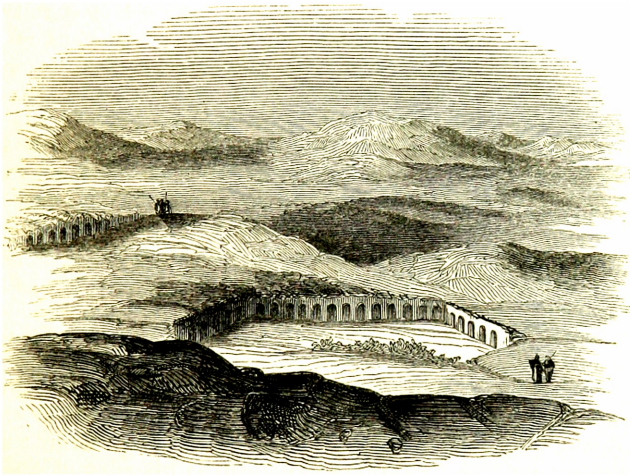
was undertaken. In buildings set apart for the worship of God, or—where God is unknown—for the worship of those elements, stars, or other created beings which have usurped His place, the object must evidently be to awaken in the mind ideas analogous to those which we may suppose the visible presence of the Deity would occasion. The ancient Persians are said to have thought no temple is worthy of God, but that in which he has graciously placed us, adorned with all the magnificence of nature, and lighted up in eternal succession by the sun, and moon, and stars. Philosophically speaking, their opinion cannot be gainsaid. But man is an imita-

tive animal, and loves to taste, in a certain degree, the pleasures of creating; and this he seems to do when, embodying the original archetype in his mind, he gives birth to forms which previously had no existence. If his conceptions have been purified by religion or philosophy from the dross of superstition, he will seek, in raising a temple, to copy, to the utmost of his power, the harmony, beauty, and majesty, so resplendently visible in the great temple of the universe. This endeavour is strikingly observable in the gothic cathedrals of our ancestors, where the slender aspiring columns, "the embowed roof," stretching over us like the vault of the sky, the vast painted windows, the lofty cloisters, the fret-work, the tracery of stone, the endless variety of chapels, recesses, niches, balconies, galleries, and arcades, beheld in the "dim religious light" which pervades those sacred edifices, and filled, peradventure, with the sounds of anthems, or the pealing notes of the organ, seem naturally to impel our thoughts heavenward, purifying them as they rise. By the religious edifices of Greece a train of impressions, in many respects different, was produced; for in those the object which architecture proposed to itself appears to have been the present enjoyment arising from the contemplation of beauty, severe grandeur, majestic proportions, and the most exquisite harmony of design and execution. The feeling of religion, therefore, though not wholly absent, too closely resembling the intellectual delight which the mimetic arts, under the direction of genius, diffuse over the soul, the divine breath that swept over the minds of the worshippers partook less of piety than of poetry. It moved, it enlivened, it vivified, but it did not elevate.

Egypt possessed a religion peculiar to itself, which, if it afforded glimpses of the soul's immortality and of a world beyond the grave, likewise contained dogmas, material, degrading, absurd, and pre-eminently gloomy; and the character of its belief is indelibly impressed on its temples. Many of their structures, when approached between rows of sphinxes or colossal statues and obelisks, or through the lofty gateways of enormous propylæa, have, no doubt, an air of extraordinary grandeur; but it is the grandeur of a fortress, or of the palace of some mighty barbaric king, not of the house of God. The character of everything around concentrates and fixes our ideas upon earth, or conducts them by a rapid transition to Hades. If the Divs and Efreets had reared temples to Ahriman, the Evil Principle, they would doubtless have selected for their model those of Egypt, in which vast proportions and gorgeous magnificence are combined, with every image and every contrivance calculated to quench in man the wish to be great and good, and destroy all modesty and purity in women. But there is deformity in the mere architectural proportions. If we imagine a human being who, from the huge dimensions of his limbs, must have been designed to reach the height of a hundred feet, but, from some constitutional defect, does not exceed sixty, we shall form a just idea of an Egyptian temple, whose elevation seldom or never corresponds with the length and breadth. An example will render this more palpable. The great temple of Karnak measured, we are told, 1200 feet in length. But what was its height? Exclusive of the propylon,—less lofty, perhaps,

than that of Edfoo,—it did not exceed seventy feet, or one-seventeenth of the length. Nearly the same imperfection is observable in that of Luxor, and every other large structure in Egypt; which gives them all the appearance of buildings sunk half way into the earth by their enormous weight. The accumulation of sand and rubbish, and the constant rising of the soil, have, moreover, contributed to enhance this original defect; an unfortunate circumstance, for which, of course, the architects are not answerable.

On the question respecting the antiquity of these edifices, I make no pretensions whatever to decide. Those who profess to have discovered the key to the ancient sacred language, attribute to them a prodigious duration; but if any real progress has been made in the science of hieroglyphics, it would yet seem far too limited to enable its possessors to speak positively in a matter of this kind. Judging from the style of architecture and sculpture observable in all the Egyptian temples, it is my opinion that the

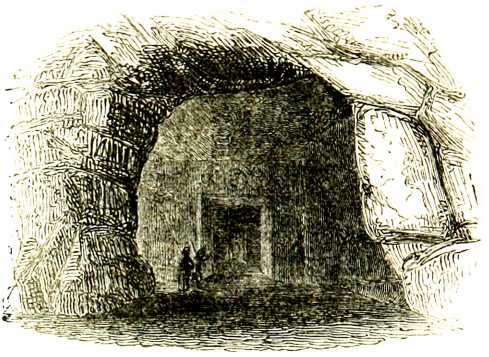


Necropolis of Thebes.

most ancient and the most modern were erected within the compass of a few hundred years of each other.

The first thing we visited was the Tombs of the Kings. Setting out at an early hour, we proceeded across the plain towards the Libyan mountains; where the sun's heat, already very powerful, was felt to be oppressive, more particularly when, having crossed the cultivated plain, we touched upon the Desert, and entered those winding rocky defiles leading to the Biban el Melook. The transition was most striking. The eye, which but a few minutes before had reposed upon verdant plains, palm-woods, and the cool blue waters of the Nile, now encountered the most desolate scenery—blasted rocks, huge perpendicular cliffs, deep and dismal ravines, the seat of eternal silence and barrenness, the very "Valley of the

Shadow of Death." In certain conditions of mind, however, such places are not unproductive of delight. Nature, elsewhere robed and concealed from sight by a thousand magical appearances, seems here to stand before us, naked in all her majesty. Our ideas wander beyond their usual sphere; for the mind, seeming to have pushed its researches into forbidden regions up to the very threshold of eternity, feels as if about to solve the mystery of life and death. Conscious of a firm hold upon existence, our spirits buoyant with robust health, we enter, as if assured of immortality, the portals of the grave, saying secretly to ourselves, "Death has, indeed, been at work here; but over us he has no power!" Everything around is calm and motionless. No animals bound along the earth, no trees wave in the wind, no streams, no rivulets flow, reminding us, by their progression, of the flux of time. The stainless purity of the atmosphere defends us even from the passing shadow of a cloud. All is stationary, fixed, immutable, as if prepared for eternal duration; sunshine and tranquillity brood over the landscape, and we participate in the calm of nature.



One of the Tombs of the Kings at Thebes.

The Theban kings, in selecting wild solitary places wherein to build their tombs, acted conformably to the general practice of the East alluded to by Job: "Why," he exclaims, "died I not from the womb? For now should I have lain still and been quiet; I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves." Following the numerous windings of the valley, we arrived at the point where it divides itself into several narrow ravines, which, on the right, terminate abruptly in a rocky wall of vast height, forming the base of a stupendous mountain; and on the left, in a series of inconsiderable gullies; and this, we were told, was the spot chosen by the Egyptian monarchs for their eternal abode. Proceeding a few steps farther, the entrances to the tombs appeared, resembling at a distance the shafts of so many mines.

> "Dî, quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque silentes:
> Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia latè
> Sit mihi fas audita loqui; sit numine vestro
> Pandere res altâ terrâ et caligine mersas."
>
> "Ye realms, yet unrevealed to human sight,
> Ye gods, who rule the regions of the night!
> Ye gliding ghosts! permit me to relate
> The mystic wonders of your silent state."—*Dryden.*

The first tomb we entered was that opened by Belzoni, which is the most remarkable of the whole. To the description of this, therefore, I shall chiefly confine myself; as in the distribution of the apartments, as well as in the columns, paintings, and hieroglyphics, they all, in a great measure, resemble each other. Several untoward circumstances combine, however, to render imperfect our pictures of these extraordinary hypogæa. The mythology of Egypt, whose most secret mysteries—those relating to the fate of the soul after its separation from the body—are supposed to be here delineated, is hitherto scarcely at all understood; and, on this account, it is very difficult, in a series of complicated scenes, to pursue the thread of events, and observe by what nice transitions the sculptor passed from one part of his narration to another. Perhaps, also, where the graver failed, the aid of hieroglyphics was called in, to express the less palpable and obvious ideas; for we see them in long perpendicular bands upon the walls, separating the various divisions of the sculptured tale into books or chapters as it were; but all these characters, which once spoke to the eye, are now dumb. Even were our knowledge competent, however—which it is not—to follow the sculptor and the scribe through the mazes of this vast mythological labyrinth, the destructive ravages of M. Champollion, and other antiquaries—who, by breaking down doorways, and sawing off the faces of pillars covered with bas-reliefs and hieroglyphics, have removed the connecting link of events, and rendered them, to a certain extent, unintelligible for ever—would effectually arrest our progress.

But to proceed with what remains. When we entered, from the burning leafless desert, into these gorgeous subterranean palaces, the effect was indescribably grand. Without, the bare inhospitable waste, scorched by an almost vertical sun, seemed scarcely to afford a shelter or a hiding-place to the fox and the jackal; within we found ourselves descending magnificent flights of steps, or wandering through long corridors, vast galleries, lofty halls, and spacious banqueting-rooms, hewn in the solid rock, and extending five or six hundred feet into the bowels of the mountain; the walls, ceilings, and pillars, covered with symbolical representations, resembling an endless picture-gallery. No idea, formed from reading, of the character and manners of the ancient Egyptians, can possibly prepare the traveller for what he finds here. With what object were these gay and costly palaces constructed? For the reception of a corpse: to be closed, like other receptacles of the dead, until doomsday; when their royal inmates, roused by the last trump, should come shivering forth from their stately halls, to stand before a far more terrible tribunal than that which preceded their burial? This seems wholly improbable. In my opinion they were made for the use of the living, not of the dead. From the ancients we learn that the Egyptians, resembling the *Ghouls* in taste, were enlivened and excited to enjoyment by the sight of a mock-corpse, which, at grand banquets, was brought round and shown to every guest. Many ancient nations reckoned the *manes* of their ancestors among the *Dii minorum gentium;* and at stated seasons, probably on the anniversaries of their death, assembled together, and invoked them with feasts and sacrifices. This practice is alluded to in the Book of Psalms: "They joined themselves also unto Bael-peor," says the Prophet, "and ate the

sacrifices of the dead." And the Hindús, among whom a religion similar to that of Egypt still flourishes, annually devote fifteen days to the worship of the manes of their ancestors; during which period the princes of Méwar, proceeding to the royal cemetery, perform at the tombs of their forefathers the rites enjoined; consisting of ablutions, prayers, and the hanging of garlands of flowers and funereal leaves on their monuments.

But whether dedicated to mourning, or to pleasure and festivity, few, I believe, ever paced these silent halls without experiencing some degree of melancholy. Who and what were they that covered these chambers with figures of the strange things they worshipped? For whose instruction were these mysterious symbols traced? What persons were permitted to enter there, to learn the secrets of life and death? What kings and counsellors were they, who built these desolate places for themselves? All these questions might, perhaps, be answered, could we interpret the characters which now mock us on the walls. And in this case should we despise or admire? As it is, the mind is profoundly irritated by uncertainty. Naturally leaning to the more favourable interpretation, we persuade ourselves that the monstrous combinations before us were not the creations of a crazed brain, but symbols possessing a dignified recondite meaning, to which the old colleges of priests could once have furnished a key. And we contemplate them with an earnest curiosity, arising probably from the persuasion that, by a careful scrutiny, we might yet lift the veil which, for many thousand years, has concealed their signification from the world. To this Shelley alludes, where he speaks of

> "The eternal pyramids,
> Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange,
> Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
> Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,
> Dark Ethiopia on her desert hills
> Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
> Stupendous columns and wild images
> Of more than man, where marble demons watch
> The zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
> Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,
> He lingered, poring on memorials
> Of the world's youth through the long burning day,
> Gazed on those speechless shapes; nor when the moon
> Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades,
> Suspended he that task, but ever gazed
> And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
> Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
> The thrilling secrets of the birth of time."

We returned from our excursion to the tombs by a road different from that by which we had reached them, climbing the mountain-side, here rising like a wall. A narrow path, not more than a foot in width, and steeps difficult to be climbed, lead up to the summit, whence the completest view of the monuments of Thebes is to be obtained.* On the Libyan side, at our feet, is El-Assassif, with its sacred inclosure; a little further off lies Gournou, with its innumerable hypogæa, the fragments of its palace, and the chaotic surface of its soil; then comes the Rameseion,

* Duc de Raguse.

with the wonders of its architecture and the ruins of its gigantic colossus. At the foot of the mountain, the little temple of the goddess Athor barely appears amidst the rubbish that surrounds it. At a greater distance, and solitary in the midst of the plain, rise like towers the statues of Memnon; behind which, relieved against a background of rugged rocks, appear the propylæa, the temples, and the palaces of Medinet-Abou; and lastly, towards the horizon, stretches out that vast hippodrome, formerly surrounded by triumphal buildings, where the ancient Egyptians applied themselves to gymnastic exercises, and to horse and chariot racing. This immense ruined circus has now the aspect of a chain of hills submitted to the processes of agriculture.

Temple of Luxor.

Towards the south, on the Arabian side, Luxor exhibits its vast propylæa, its elegant obelisk, and its graceful colonnades, proudly rising above the wretched mud-huts of the Fellahs. To the east, directly in front of you, Karnak appears, with its immense avenues of sphinxes, its forest of columns, and mountains of ruins; beyond which may be perceived, towards the horizon, the remains of Med-Amoud, whose houses of earth are in part

hidden by a forest of palm-trees. Add to all this the distant mountains of the Thebaid, and the desert hemming in on every side this wonderful scene, in the midst of which the majestic Nile rolls along, and you will have an idea of the aspect of Thebes, of a scene without a parallel in the world, and which exerts upon the imagination an inexplicable and magical influence.*

> "How tranquilly the gorgeous city lies
> Robed in the rich gleams of the setting sun.
> Reflecting back its glories! her high domes,
> And towers, and groves, all softened in the distance,
> While Nilus threads its pure streams through her gates
> Like a bright glistening snake with mazy folds."
>
> READE'S *Record of the Pyramids.*

It is impossible to enter here into a detailed description of the ruins still found at Thebes. Innumerable travellers have attempted to convey by language some idea of them, with more or less success; but their delineations are voluminous, and filled with so many elaborate details, that to abridge would be to deprive them of all their merit. Most of the structures on both sides of the river are of a sacred character, and built in obedience to the same principles of taste. A brief sketch of the more remarkable I shall here introduce:—

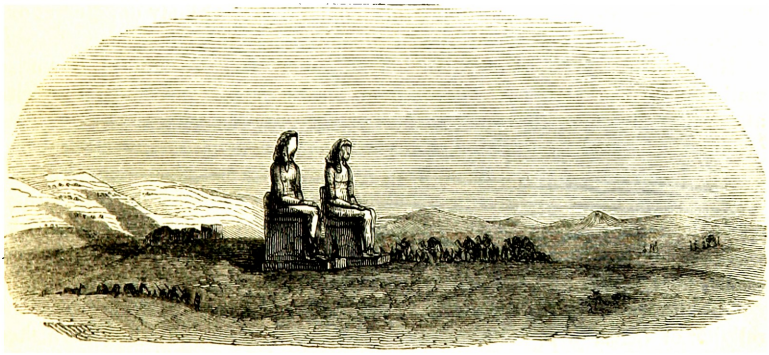
The hewn temple of the Assassif, otherwise called Dayr-el-Bahree, is excavated under the western hills, and is more remarkable from circumstances connected with its origin and construction, than for grandeur and beauty. It is one of the oldest monuments of Thebes. Its chambers, excavated in the friable rock, are roofed with corbelled vaults, formed of horizontal courses; the chief apartment was entered through a granite propylon, and the whole was connected with the plain by an inclined ascent, approached by a long avenue of sphinxes, now destroyed. Neither the name nor sex of the founder has hitherto been satisfactorily determined. Regarded as the work of an Ethiopian, Dayr-el-Bahree assumes a new interest; for as this is the only excavated monument in Egypt not sepulchral, it is very probable that the idea was borrowed from Ethiopia; that cavern-temples were then, as well as subsequently, common there; and that many of the characteristics of Egyptian architecture were derived from such works.†

The village of Gournou, not far distant, towards the Nile, stands in a grove of palm-trees, where the cultivated soil joins the rocky flat, exactly at the spot where the road turns off to the right to go to the tombs of the kings. It consists of a number of houses of unburned brick, generally small, but some of them, much larger, are of superior workmanship to the average of ruined houses in this country. At the time of our visit, it was quite uninhabited. The natives had abandoned it, and retired to the caves in the adjoining rocky flat; because, from the low situation, and the filling up of the canals, the village is liable to be overflowed during the time of the inundation. However, when the river subsides, and the ground becomes dry, they quit their rocky tenements and return to their

* Cadalvène et Breuvery. † Wathen.

mansions of clay, which are more conveniently situated for water, grazing, and agriculture.* The ruin at Gournou is unlike any other monument in Thebes. Instead of the ordinary lofty propylon, its front presents a long shallow portico, or colonnade giving access through three entrances to as many halls or vestibules with columns, conducting to various apartments beyond. These are well lighted, open, and airy, with nothing of the secrecy of the Egyptian adytum. The whole building indeed has a more habitable air than any other at Thebes, except that before the palace of Medinet Habou.†

The Rameseion, or Palace of Rameses, otherwise called the Memnonium, and sometimes the Tomb of Osymandyas, deserves perhaps, from the purity of its style, the first rank among the monuments of Thebes. The propylæa, with which it was furnished, and on which may still be made out many military representations, having reference to the conquests of Rameses the Great, or Sesostris of the Greeks, are nearly destroyed, and the waters of the river, which year by year undermine their bases at the time of the inundation, must succeed at length in utterly destroying them. The front part of the edifice is in the worst preservation. Among its ruins are to be seen the fragments of the colossal statue of Rameses, the most prodigious production of the statuary's art. The royal legend graven on the upper part of the arm of this enormous monolith, leaves no doubt as to the real name of the prince whom it was intended to represent. The monarch, in a sitting posture, was chiselled, as well as his seat, out of a single block of rose granite of extraordinary beauty, and we heard that at this day the Arabs take fragments of it to Cairo, where they are used to supply the place of diamonds in glass-cutting. The proportions of the statue are so gigantic, that one must stand at some considerable distance in order to take them in at one glance; it is now broken into several pieces, upon which may be still distinguished the marks of the wedges employed to mutilate it, and



Memnon

whose slow and laborious action attested the extreme perseverance exhibited in the work of destruction.

A vast hall, adorned with columns, the least preserved among those

* Dr. Richardson. † Wathen.

of the Memnonium, affords one of the most perfect models remaining of Egyptian architecture. The roof is supported by two rows of pillars, whose capitals, fashioned to represent the lotus flower, and still intact, are executed in a style of great purity. A doorway, once gilded, leads from this to another chamber now completely ruined. In this were formerly treasured up the famous astronomical circle of gold, and that library over which was written the significant inscription, "Medicine for the Mind*."

Our next visit was to the colossal statues on the plain, one of which, supposed to be that of Memnon, emitted vocal sounds when touched by the first rays of the sun. On arriving, we found a troop of Arabs assembled, provided with mummies, images, beads and sandals, scarabæi, pieces of papyri, broken pottery, cracked ibis jars, and numerous other antiques, which they insisted on our purchasing immediately. They were very exorbitant in their prices; but we brought them to terms by refusing to deal with them; they then lowered their demands, and we made a selection of the most curious. These fellows were nearly naked, having only a ragged gown thrown over their shoulders, and falling to the knees. Their heads, which were shaven almost to the skull, were protected against the fierce heat of the sun only by a thin cap which covered the crown. A wilder-looking set of savages I have never seen even in the forests of North America. The favoured few of whom we had made purchases, found themselves an object of enmity with their companions, who declared that the articles sold were common property. They insisted upon a distribution of the "spoils," which, being refused, led to a battle-royal, upon which the skulls and bones of the ancient Egyptians were pretty severely tested upon the bodies of their descendants. Our horses, frightened by the clamour and tumult, started off as if a pack of devils were at their heels; whereupon, with our Arab attendants, we fell upon the whole party, and with a vigorous application of our sticks, soon put them to rout. They returned one by one, not long after, and continued during the rest of the day dogging at our heels, and pestering us with cries of "backshish†."

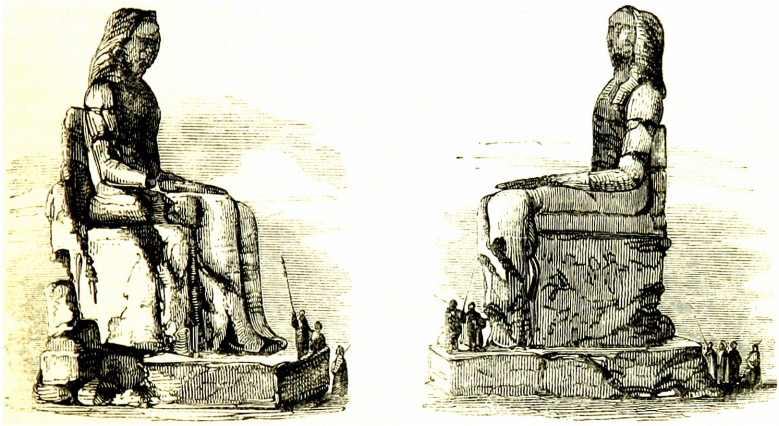
Relieved by the flight of these indefatigable *virtuosi*, we sat down to contemplate the statues. Elevated on bases or low pedestals, they rise about fifty-two feet above the surface of the ground, which, having been gradually elevated by the annual deposit from the Nile, is now several feet above its ancient level. Seen from the western or Necropolis hills at sunset, their effect is very remarkable. The eye can scarcely define their forms as sitting figures, and they rise isolate in the midst of the plain like rocks in the expanse of ocean. Companions for thirty-three centuries, what revolutions of religion and empire have they witnessed! The "bleating gods" of Egypt swept away before the conquering cross,—the religion of Jesus, first obscured and adulterated, then almost extinguished before the armies of Omar; Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Turks, following and expelling each other,—the natives the docile slaves to all! Moses may have beheld these statues, and still they survive,—the lonely monarchs of the ancient plain.

They bear the name of Amenof III., and stood on the line of approach

* Cadalvène et Breuvery. † Joy Morris.

to a temple of his foundation, the substructions of which alone remain. Each was originally a single block of sandstone. The features are scarred and half obliterated; the massive head-dress descends over the breast; the hands lie stretched upon the thighs; a line of hieroglyphics descends the back. The sides of the throne are ornamented with an elegant device, often met with in Egyptian sculpture, and supposed to be allusive to the sovereign's dominion over Upper and Lower Egypt; the god Nilus bends the long stalks of two different water-plants, indicative of the Upper and the Lower country, round the support of a table or pedestal, over which are the two royal ovals. Female figures are attached to the front of the thrones: though reaching only to the knees of the great statues, these are eighteen feet high!

When Strabo was at Thebes, the upper half of the musical statue was wanting, having been broken off at the waist by an earthquake, as he was told; but an inscription with more probability says, by Cambyses. It was subsequently completed with masonry, and thus remains. The legs are



covered with inscriptions in prose and verse, ancient and modern. Many visitors bare witness to the vocal powers of the statue. Some Roman ladies, who accompanied Adrian and his consort in their progress, assure us they heard the morning salutation in company with the emperor. Seventeen centuries pass away, and our own countrywomen add their names to those of Julia Romilla and Cecilia Treboulla.

The tradition of the morning sound is still retained among the peasantry in the vulgar name of the statue, Salamat, the common Arabic salutation.* Numerous theories have been started to explain the miraculous sounds uttered by this statue of Memnon. One writer supposes a man to have been concealed high up in the interior, but without evidence or probability. Sir Frederick Henniker appears to suggest that some kind of pipe may have been employed; while other writers have imagined various other means of

* Wathen.

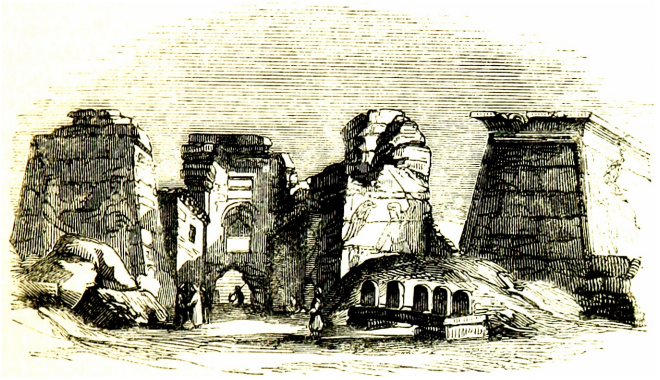
accounting for the phenomenon. Monsieur Letronne has had recourse to a physical theory, which, though accompanied by several difficulties, is that which I should feel most disposed to adopt. In the court of the great temple of Kalabshe lies an enormous block of stone, which, on being struck, even by the heel in passing, emits a loud sound, closely resembling that supposed to have been uttered by the statue of Memnon. In this case, however, no mention is made of any stroke, save that of the earliest rays of the sun. Travellers mention similar phenomena in other parts of the world. Humboldt heard something like the pealing of an organ issuing from the granite rocks on the banks of the Orinoco; and M. de Rozière speaks of certain quarries in the Pyrenees, which give forth in the morning a strange sound, upon which have been bestowed the name of the Matins of Maledetta. Messrs. Cadalvène and Breuvery mention also "several travellers,"* but without naming them, who report themselves to have heard in the granite chapel in the neighbouring temple of Karnak a music resembling that of the Æolian harp. But if, upon the faith of ancient writers, we admit the fact at all, we must admit all the circumstances which they give in connection with it; for we have no right to accept just so much of the story as we fancy ourselves able to understand, and reject the remainder. Now tradition says, that as the first beams of the sun breaking over the Arabian mountains, and shooting athwart the plain of Thebes, smote upon the swarthy countenance of Memnon, a noise issued from the statue, which was interpreted into a salutation. Strabo, however, introduces a variation into the account. He tells us, that visiting the Memnon during the first hour of the day, in company with Ælius Gallus and a number of his friends and soldiers, he himself heard the sound; but whether it came from the pedestal, or the fragment of the torso, or some of the bystanders, he could not determine. But his account completely disposes of one of the above-mentioned theories, for the statue was then broken in two, and the lower part of the body only remained standing; so that had there been an interior staircase, it would have been easy to discover the juggle. Besides, he states distinctly that the sound was believed to proceed from the fragment of the figure or the base.

Several modern travellers, putting no faith in the tradition, that Septimus Severus, by building up the statue, had extinguished its voice, have repeated the experiment of Strabo. "Resolved to try our fortune," says Dr. Richardson, "and to give the Memnon an opportunity of being equally vocal to us as he had been to other travellers, Lord Corry and myself set out one morning at peep of dawn, and arrived at the spot about half an hour before sunrise. We remained till he was an hour above the horizon, and, though the god of day shone out as bright and cloudless as ever he did on the son of Tithonus, no grateful salutation of welcome was echoed in return—all was still and silent as the grave. The voice had departed from Memnon, and the vivifying ray touched the mute and monumental effigies in vain."

I next visited the ruins of Medinet Habou, which, with the exception of some few unimportant additions, unworthy the slightest attention,

* These travellers were the artists employed in the French expedition. Description de l'Egypte, t. i. p. 234.

should, I think, be regarded as the most ancient architectural remains in Egypt. They have all the rude grandeur of an edifice erected in barbarous times. The style of ornament, the massive proportions of the columns, the gigantic statues, and the intaglios, cut deep in the face of the wall, and representing with awkward vigour the circumstances of savage warfare, all combine in these antique ruins to awaken the idea of a rock-temple, rather than of a pile of masonry. Had this building been suffered to retain its original form, it might probably have exhibited something like symmetry; but the ages succeeding its erection, preferring the piecing out of an ancient



Palace and Temple of Medinet Abou at Thebes.

structure to the raising of a new one, added in one part a propylon, in another a suite of chambers, in a third a court, until, by their heterogeneous increments, they had succeeded in utterly confounding the primitive design. Nor is this all. For while spoiling some portions by their improvements, they appear, with characteristic inconsistency, to have ruined others; as we find in the more modern walls stones on which are the remains of sculpture and hieroglyphics reversed.

In a rocky sequestered valley, among the mountains of Medinet Habou, are found what have been denominated, I know not wherefore, the "Tombs of the Queens." For this appellation there seems to be no other foundation than the idea, that as the Egyptian ladies enjoyed, during life, a kind of lawful empire over their husbands, the latter may not have chosen to subject themselves, after death, to their despotism, which might have disturbed the tranquillity and embittered the enjoyments of Amenti. But this is a lame reason for supposing that the Theban queens were thus interred apart, in a sort of eternal exile. These tombs, in all probability, were private, like those of Gournou, but belonging to some more opulent families, whose means enabled them to imitate, in some measure, the sepulchral extravagance of their kings. The apartments are fewer, smaller, and far less sumptuously ornamented than those in the Beban-el-Melook. Many of them contain deep mummy-pits, and a lower suite of chambers. Some were filled, when we visited them, with a profusion of mummies, in

every stage of decay, so that it was in some places impossible to advance a step without crushing a skull, or treading on the breastbone of a queen. It was not without considerable reluctance that I thus profaned the relics of the dead: but, once entered, it was necessary to make our way out, and the bodies lay everywhere in our path. From among the heaps of mummies we picked up a thigh-bone, about three feet in length; but to what animal it belonged my ignorance of anatomy disabled me from deciding.

Travellers usually complain of the number and fierceness of the dogs which infest the cemeteries and uninhabited parts of Alexandria. But they are tame and gentle compared with those of Gournou, where night and day their bark is heard, following at your heels in troops when you leave the village, and angrily assailing you, at every winding of the road, and the entrance to every tomb, on your return. Were they contented with barking, however, the nuisance would be less intolerable; but, if not kept off by sticks or stones, and those neither light nor small ones, they would tear you like wild beasts. The whole face of the hills, from the tombs to the cultivated land, having been broken up in search of mummies, is full of deep and dangerous pitfalls. Here, where the majority of the vulgar dead seem to have been buried, fragments of bodies, unbandaged, and torn open in search of papyri, legs, arms, bones, skulls, chips of coffins, painted linen, morsels of bitumen and resin, and other funereal paraphernalia, strew the ground in all directions. It does not appear that the Arabs, as some travellers have pretended, habitually make use of the dead bodies for fuel, though they would, no doubt, burn well, on account of their dryness, and the great quantity of combustible matter they contain; for, though wood and charcoal are extremely dear, and they have no substitute but the dry dung of animals, heaps of mummies are left to fall to dust upon the surface of the earth, in the neighbourhood of their dwellings. Yet, were all these remains collected, and consumed on one pile, or even burned piecemeal by the Arabs, it would be less offensive to the feelings than to behold them thus wantonly trampled under foot.

Desirous of examining the monuments on the eastern bank, we now crossed the Nile; and, before beginning our examination, breakfasted with a friend, who had for some weeks resided in a small house at Luxor, overlooking the river, a magnificent view of which we commanded from the open window. He was engaged, when we entered, in taking the height of the conical peak of the Libyan range, which he found to be nearly thirteen hundred feet above the level of the sea. The western plain exhibited a rich and beautiful appearance, with its palm-groves and verdant fields, and the vast piles of Egyptian ruins stretching in the background along the foot of the rocks. After finishing our coffee, we applied ourselves to the business of the day,—a survey of the palaces and temples and sphinxes and propylæa and obelisks which still mark the site of the great city of Jove.

I scarcely hope that I shall be able to convey, by description, any adequate idea of these venerable and magnificent structures. They differ so widely from the specimens of architecture which belong to other countries and to modern times, that words, however carefully selected, lose their power of imparting clear and accurate ideas; and it would be much easier to incur the suspicion of exaggerating, or even of misrepresenting,

than to communicate to others, through this medium, the impression made by a careful and repeated inspection of the temples of Luxor and Karnak. The drawings of these objects which I have seen have not been much more successful than verbal descriptions, owing, I presume, to the same inherent difficulties in the subjects. The painter can exhibit only colours and forms, as the describer is mostly limited to giving dimensions and details; but both must leave it for the imagination to fill up the immense outline of grandeur with that affluence of beautiful parts, and proportions, and sumptuous ornaments, which possess a much higher claim upon our admiration.

At a few hundred yards from the river is the temple of Luxor, the first object that strikes the eye on approaching Thebes. It stands on an artificial foundation, sufficiently elevated to place it above the inundation. We turned into the Arab village immediately before it, and approached it on the north side. A stupendous propylon, more than two hundred feet broad, and eighty feet high, gives entrance to the temple. Two colossal statues, half-buried in the sand, are placed against the propylon; and immediately in front of them were two beautiful obelisks, eighty feet in height, and covered with hieroglyphics, cut in the granite, near two inches deep, with a finish and niceness of touch that is as fresh now as when first sculptured. One of these obelisks is now in the *Place de la Concorde* at Paris: the other still maintains its original position. The whole surface of the propylon is covered with representations of battle scenes, cut in *intaglio rilievato*. The prodigious number of human figures, horses, and chariots, is no less astonishing than the spirit and animation which pervades the whole. It is a speaking picture, and excites the most vivid emotions of sympathy with the vanquished, and exultation with the proud victors, that are seen riding in triumph over the battle-field. The flight of the enemy, the rapid pursuit, the contending cohorts, the rise and fall of glittering standards, denoting the alternations of success and repulse, the invincible victor of the day, discharging clouds of javelins from his chariot, the fiery steeds of which are urging their way over the bodies of the slain, with all the tumult, shock, and confusion of a great battle, are depicted upon the wall of the propylon with a spirit and truth that may rival the happiest efforts of the pencil. This is a most interesting historical picture of ancient warfare. The hero, whose glories are here so vividly celebrated, is most probably Sesostris, whose victorious car, if we believe the ancient writers, rode in triumph over all the known regions of the world.*

Passing under the portal of the propylon, we entered into a court, two hundred and thirty-four feet long by one hundred and seventy-four feet wide, where the remains of a double range of pillars, with the bell-shaped capital, are still to be seen. This court is much obstructed by an Arab village built within it, the huts of which, erected against the walls and columns, much impair the effect of the whole. A portion also serves as a magazine of grain. Beyond this court are other propylæa, behind which is a double row of seven columns, with lotus capitals, each twenty-two feet in circumference. This row of columns conducts into a court one hundred and sixty feet long, and one hundred and forty wide, terminated at each

* Joy Morris.

side by a row of pillars. Beyond this is another portico, of thirty-two columns, and then follows the sanctuary, or innermost part of the temple. It is impossible, by description, to give an adequate idea of these extensive ruins. The temple of Luxor is supposed to be of great antiquity. Vast cost and labour were expended in its construction; and though it does not equal the grandeur of Karnak, it exhibits much of that gigantic architecture which characterises all the works of the Egyptians, and displays a finish and skill in its sculptures that denote a highly-advanced period of art. The interior of the temple is, however, so much filled up with sand-heaps and Arab huts, that it is impossible to get an idea of it in its original state. The exterior colonnades remain in almost unbroken lines, while the interior is completely unroofed and ruined. It is still the skeleton of a magnificent temple.

Our appearance among the ruins attracted a troop of Ghawazee, who followed us, dancing to the sound of cymbals and Arab tambourines. They are as distinct in form and feature from other Arabs, as the gypsies from the people among whom they dwell. They were attired in rich costume, which set off their voluptuous figures with much effect. As we reclined against the base of a column, costumed *à la Turque*, smoking our pipes, and surveying the ruins, with this band of *artistes* before us, performing some of those wild Oriental dances, which have more of grace than modesty in them, striking their cymbals, and throwing themselves into every variety of attitude, with some half-naked Arabs from our boat, and a cluster of Bedouins standing behind us, with their muskets slung across their shoulders, we formed quite a picturesque group. In the abstraction in which we had been thrown by the music, the dance, and the ruins, we had forgot the thievish character of the Bedouins behind us. They much increased the picturesqueness of the scene by decamping with our breakfast, which abruptly put an end to the reveries in which we had been indulging. We walked into the bazār of the village, and made a breakfast on raw eggs and Arab cakes.

The imposing front of the temple of Luxor faces that of Karnak, which is distant from it nearly two miles, in a direction a little east of north. These sacred edifices were formerly connected by an avenue of sphinxes, extending from one to the other, and fifty feet wide. For a quarter of a mile or more, next to Karnak, they still remain, though in a very mutilated condition, and they may be traced more than half way to Luxor by a multitude of fragments which retain their original position. Some have found traces of them still nearer to Luxor. I discovered none south of the point above indicated; though, as my search was prosecuted by twilight, I cannot rely with confidence upon its results.

These sphinxes are formed of the same kind of sandstone as that employed in building the temple. They are in a couchant posture, seventeen feet long, and about ten feet high. The paw of one of them which I measured was twenty inches wide. They face each other, looking directly across the avenue, and each holds between his paws a small human figure, the hands crossed over the breast, and grasping a sort of mace, in form like a cross. This appears perpetually among the figures which adorn the Egyptian temples, and seems to be a badge of dignity or a symbol

of divinity. The distance between the sphinxes of the same row is about ten feet. The whole number upon this avenue when entire was about 1600. Another avenue of sphinxes, of which a large number are still to be seen next the temple, extended from its eastern point to the river, opposite to Gournou, about the same distance from Karnak as Luxor. A third connected its north front with some unknown point in that direction. Of these two, a considerable number of sphinxes still remain in their original position. Not less than four thousand of these massive statues adorned the different approaches to this magnificent edifice. They formed the avenues through which individual worshippers and religious processions arrived at the holy precincts. The sphinx, which was composed of the body of a lion joined with the head of a ram, was sacred in the eyes of the Egyptians; and I can conceive of nothing better calculated to inspire the devotee with overwhelming sentiments than an approach to this magnificent temple, under the mild, but awful and immovable gaze of this double row of Gods, each a visible representation of strength, intelligence, and divinity.

The avenue that led from Luxor terminates in front of a temple of Isis, which is connected with the grand temple, and distant from it 150 or 200 yards, in a southern direction. There are ten or more smaller temples embraced within a circumference of less than two miles, all of which were united with the main structure by colonnades and other splendid architecture, and formed with it a system of sacred edifices which might, without exaggeration or impropriety, be regarded as one immense temple.*

In describing the arts by which tyranny aimed of old at keeping the people in subjection, Aristotle enumerates, among the most efficacious, that of utterly impoverishing them, by erecting prodigiously expensive structures, such as the pyramids of Egypt, and the magnificent dedications of Cypselus. The Theban kings appear to have been deeply versed in these arts. To their slaves, the motive assigned, if they condescended to assign any, was, of course, piety towards the Gods; and with persons of a character analogous to that of their slaves, they have obtained, in succeeding ages, credit for so holy an intention. But with their political motives a large proportion of mere vanity was probably mingled—advancing recklessly to its own gratification, through the sweat and toil and homely privations of the poor; and to these united incentives we owe the architectural grandeur of such edifices as the temple of *Karnak*. Considerations of this kind are not the first, however, which present themselves to the mind of the traveller in the midst of ruins so vast and magnificent. Beholding before him the result of the continuous labour of myriads, once arranged and distributed into something like a whole, designed to create in the minds of the spectators a sentiment of superstitious awe, but now shattered to fragments, and grouped in picturesque masses of ruin by the giant hand of Time, the feelings which spontaneously arise are those of satisfaction and pleasure. Art, he perceives, has been there. The towering column, the aspiring obelisk, the frieze and architrave covered

* Olin.

with symbolical imagery, together with the vast portals, beneath which Typhæus or Enceladus might have entered without bowing the head, and the innumerable characters of unknown import which everywhere meet the eye, combine to awaken in his breast the sentiment of enthusiasm. Under the influence of this feeling we long wandered through the temple. Each took a different way. I remained alone in the grand hall, where one hundred and sixty-two columns, covered with painted sculpture and hieroglyphics, support the roof, and, disposed in numerous ranges, produce a series of long vistas, resembling the openings in a forest. Sitting down at the foot of one of these pillars, between which the bright sunshine streamed in ,broad masses through the breaks in the wall, I contemplated at leisure the features of the scene around me. Many doves, and innumerable sparrows, were perched above upon the painted capitals, cooing and twittering, or flitting to and fro between the columns. Hawks, too, the sacred birds of Osiris, were wheeling about and screaming overhead. These were the only sounds audible, and they were not unpleasing.

Few persons, in such a situation, would be able to resist the temptation to indulge in melancholy reflections; and though it was equally foreign to my object and character to seek, among the wrecks of antiquity, the means of saddening my mind, I imperceptibly fell into the trite subject of the political fate of man, and the debased and humiliating condition to which the greater number have been doomed in almost all countries. The very edifice in which I sat had been one of the instruments by which the political degradation of the Egyptians had been effected. Priestly craft, combined with the absolute power of kings, sunk them, in many respects, below the level of the brute; and legislation, if the regulations by which despots hedge round their power deserve the name, divided them, if there be any faith in history, into castes, by which the majority were condemned to pursue, from father to son, without hope or chance of a favourable change, the most sordid and servile drudgery. From the enjoyments and pleasures of science, literature, and arts, they were necessarily excluded for ever. For, since the members of one caste could not encroach on the province of another, all persons, not of the sacerdotal order, who preserved the monopoly of intellectual pursuits, must necessarily have been plunged in the profoundest ignorance, which will account for the prevalence of human sacrifices so late as the age of Amasis; and of animal worship, until their bestial gods were put to flight by Christianity. Ancient Egypt, if we draw aside the veil cast over it by ignorant admiration, was nothing but a nest of priests and slaves; for despotism itself was here subordinate to the sacerdotal tyrants, who either elevated a member of their order to the throne, or, when the sceptre had passed by unavoidable accident into the hands of another, associated its possessor with themselves. Thus it happened that Egypt produced neither poets, nor historians, nor artists, properly so called. By all these forms of intellectual exertion men address themselves to the people, and in Egypt the people were not only incapable of deriving either profit or advantage from such labours, but were absolutely excluded by the law from enjoyments of this exalted

kind. Hence, to return to the point from which I set out, though the genius of the nation would appear to have qualified them for excelling in technical pursuits, none of the arts attained to perfection in this country, and the greater number languished in cold mediocrity.

When I had remained for some time at the foot of the column, pursuing my ideas into periods of remote antiquity, my companion returned into the hypostyle, and we proceeded to examine together the general aspect of the temple. We had hardly made half the circuit of the ruins before we were overtaken by night. It stole so gently upon us, that we did not perceive its coming on, except in the softer hues of the sky, and the mellowing tints with which it invested the majestic ruins around us. As we had designed returning to Karnak on the morrow, we did not think it worth the trouble of going back to the boats that evening. Fortunately for my companion, a full moon, rising early after sunset, gave him an opportunity of sketching Karnak by moonlight. We made a frugal meal of eggs, milk and bread, on the back of a sphinx, beneath a propylon, whose gods and goddesses seemed to frown upon us in the dim twilight. We stabled our donkeys in the sanctuary, under the protecting guardianship of Isis and Osiris, and then disposed of ourselves for the night. My companion, with a servant and donkey-boy, stationed himself on a commanding point of view to sketch the ruins, while I, with my servant, strolled among the halls and corridors of the palace. I entered the great hall. The glare of day was gone; not a zephyr was stirring, and as we walked down the central avenue, our footsteps woke the slumbering echoes. I felt a religious awe in disturbing the solitude of this ancient shrine. I threw myself at the base of one of the gigantic columns, unwilling to break the eternal silence that seemed to repose here. Wherever I gazed, colossal figures of gods and kings looked down upon me from the walls and columns. The moonlight threw its slant beams through the crevices and holes in the wall, enveloping all in a dim, religious light. The roof was gone, and the columns that rose

Hall of Columns.

from the interred pavement beneath, seemed to support the blue canopy above, fretted with a countless host of stars. The lofty capitals were indistinctly seen, buried in the blue void, and seemed to commingle with, and be lost in, the depths above.

Three thousand years ago, and this forest of columns was standing; these walls were then as firm as now, and that stupendous propylon, which cast its shadow down these pillared aisles, excited the astonishment of those distant ages, as it has of all subsequent times. What changes has the world seen since the foundations of this edifice were laid! What countless generations of men have risen and fallen, and passed away! What transitions from barbarism to civilisation, and from civilisation to barbarism, in that wide interval of time! What mighty armies have passed through this hall! Here Cambyses stayed his chariot wheels to gaze in wonder at the triumphs of architecture. Here Sesostris was welcomed back, with the loud acclaim of millions, from his conquests. The sublimity of this hall stayed the destroying hand of the Ptolemies. The Cæsars were awed into humility when they trod these aisles—and even the Arab hosts, as they swept by on the tide of victory, paused to admire—and the armies of France, as they rushed by in pursuit of the flying Memlooks, were so struck with amazement at the ruins, that they fell upon their knees in homage, and rent the air with shouts of applause.

Losing myself in these reveries, I fell asleep, with a drowsy owl over my head, hooting at his image among the hieroglyphics on the columns. About midnight I was awoke by the distant tread of my companion. As I opened my eyes, I was surprised to see an object seated at the base of a column, about twenty feet distant, glaring upon me with the most diabolical pair of eyes I had ever seen. As I slowly recovered my sight, I made out the stranger to be a peculiarly ferocious-looking jackal. He seemed to be in as deep an abstraction as that which put me asleep; for, as I gently unlashed my gun, he did not move an inch. I certainly was as much surprised at his impudence as he at my imprudence. He did not recover his senses until I had planted a few shot between his bright orbs. He then betook himself to flight with a dismal howling that scared all the birds, sacred and profane, from their haunts among the capitals of the columns, stunning my ears with their confused plaints. As we had no desire to give our bodies up as food to jackals, we mounted our donkeys and rode back to the boat.* This scene recalled to my mind the verses of a delightful poet, friendly and familiar to me for years, who, speaking of other ruins in a distant land, thus addresses the stranger:—

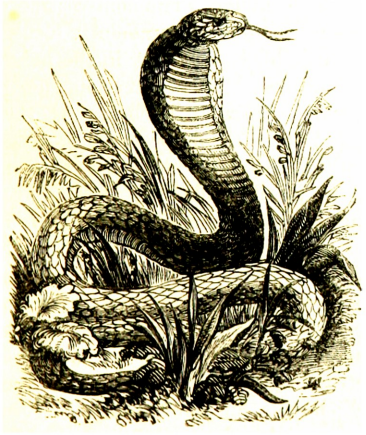
"Whose eye shall here survey
The path of Time, where ruin marks his way,
When wildly moans the solemn midnight bird,
And the gaunt jackal's piercing cry is heard;
If thine the soul with sacred ardour fraught,
Rapt in the poet's dream, or sage's thought,
To thee, these mouldering walls a voice shall raise,
And sadly tell how earthly pride decays;
How human hopes, like human works, depart,
And leave behind the ruins of the heart!"†

* Joy Morris. † D. L. Richardson. "Literary Leaves."

On the following day I witnessed a curious scene; it was a war between the wild dogs, which inhabit the ruins of Thebes, and the great hawks which abound in Upper Egypt. Our cook had just killed a sheep, and had thrown the intestines on the bank of the river. I was sitting with my eyes fixed upon the magnificent ruins of Luxor, when I saw a crowd of hungry dogs issue from them, which, desiring to have their share of the feast, immediately fell upon the refuse of the animal; but their appetite was not to be gratified so easily as they had expected; for other creatures, hovering in the air above us, had previously seen all that had passed, and the moment that the cook withdrew, and the dogs approached, a swarm of hawks and vultures, rapidly cleaving the air, rushed upon their prey, and disputed it with their rivals. A very curious battle then began; the bird of Osiris, by turns attacking or attacked, sometimes succeeded in snatching the booty from the jaws of the savage dog, which yelped and barked after it, while the victor, rising into the air, seemed to mock at his impotent cries.

There are many hyænas in the environs of Thebes, and during the night we frequently heard the howlings of these furious animals. When Europeans intend visiting a catacomb, they take the precaution of firing a pistol before they enter, in order to oblige these creatures to quit their retreat. A gentleman, whom his great love of antiquities induces to remain in these savage dens, told us that he was sometimes visited during the night by these animals, but that, thanks to the vigilance of his dog, he had succeeded in dislodging them. I saw two of them in Lower Egypt, which a Frank had brought up and almost tamed,—at least he was able to touch them: but their natural ferocity is much more difficult to conquer than that of the lion or even the tiger.

We never met with any serpents during the whole of our journey in Upper Egypt, the season not being sufficiently advanced: for the serpents of these climates require excessive heat, and keep under ground during the winter months. Some of them are extremely venomous, others not very dangerous, and these are supposed to be the kind which the ancient Egyptians revered as emblems of the good genius. An Italian physician, who had made a nine months' stay at Thebes, told me that one day taking his dinner near the catacombs, he saw ten of these animals, four or five feet in length, of a flesh-colour inclining to rose, approach and glide over some vessels filled with milk, which were on the ground, in order to drink. Their bodies, in this most graceful position, seemed to be a part of



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the vessel, and to form the handle; and it was doubtless in this manner that these animals gave the ancients the idea of those beautiful vases, the elegant forms of which we still endeavour to imitate.*

CHAPTER XXXI.

Rebellion of an Arab Prophet.

So far, however deep the interest created in our minds by the wonders of the Thebaid, our feelings had flowed in a calm unbroken current, or at any rate their surface had been disturbed only by some trifling obstacle that served to break its monotony; but now—as occasionally in the course of the Nile itself, upon whose banks we sojourned for the time—indications began to manifest themselves of troubled waters not far ahead, of the neighbourhood, in fact, of roaring cataracts. I had passed over to Gournou and taken up my abode with M. Janni, a Greek collector of antiquities, and the *de facto* head of the village; but, drawn by the irresistible attraction of the great temples of Luxor and Karnak with their avenues of sphinxes, I made it a practice to go over from time to time and explore them. One morning, having started with this intention, I was hastily recalled by the servant of my host, who had, I learned, something important to communicate. This was no less than that the Arabs were in a state of open rebellion, and that to cross the river would be to expose myself to the greatest possible danger. I was grieved, though not surprised, at this outbreak, knowing well in what detestation the Pasha's rule was held throughout the country. That it could only prove unsuccessful, however, and must lead to useless bloodshed, I also knew. The composition of the revolters, their hopes and the grounds of them, were eminently characteristic. Three or four hundred Arabs, assembled at Beirat in the neighbourhood of Medinet Habou, formed the nucleus of the insurrection, though discontent was spread throughout the whole plain of Thebes. At their head was a Sheikh, who, having assumed the title of prophet, promised them victory in the name of heaven; and certainly his cause was one which might well have been supposed to merit a blessing from above; nor, as will be seen, did his mild character and humane disposition ill become the holy mission with which he may have supposed himself to be entrusted. However, he did not disdain to resort to human means and appliances; and had sent a deputation, composed of some ten or twelve persons, to wait on the chief of Gournou, and procure arms and ammunition. A member of this party was seated with Janni on a carpet when I arrived, and succeeded in persuading him to give up one gun out of four, but no ammunition. With this he went away carrying the intelligence, derived, it may be, from the fact of Janni's casting some bullets in his presence, that we intended to defend ourselves.

* Minutoli.

This very shortly produced a sort of challenge from the insurgents, who sent to say that they understood we wished to have a battle with them; but we returned an answer to the effect that we had no such desire, and wished they would not molest us. The Arab who acted as our herald on this occasion informed us, that during his audience some of the Prophet's more zealous followers handed in a requisition to be allowed to decapitate all the Copts, to which the saint answered by an exhortation to general forbearance, urging the propriety of not injuring any one unless compelled. "If you are attacked," said he, "you may kill, but not otherwise." Myself and my companions also were brought under his notice, and he solemnly declared "that the English were his friends, and that he was their friend, and would protect them." Nay, more, he swore by the Koran and the sword, "that if any one robbed an Englishman, even of the cord of a camel or an ass, he would restore them a camel or an ass in its place," and added, "that he had an order from God and the Grand Signor to dethrone Mohammed Ali Pasha." He wound up by averring that he had no intention of molesting us, but was resolved to attack the new kasheff who had just arrived at Gamounli, a village six or seven miles below Thebes.

In spite of these assurances, neither Janni nor his wife was very comfortable during the day; but as evening came on their fears gradually abated. By about nine o'clock the rest of the inhabitants of the village seemed to be of the same mind, mustering courage to take to their guns and long spears, with which they gathered before our house, where they remained all night.

The extraordinary position in which I thus found myself, naturally chased away sleep from my eyes. There I was in the depths of Africa, in the midst of a village, the inhabitants of which were little, if anything, above the savage state, and had now risen in arms, possibly to defend their thresholds and their hearths, possibly to join in the movement which was gradually communicating itself to all the country round. On every side, amidst the ruins of a capital that fell 2000 years ago, was scattered a population that had long groaned under every species of oppression, and were now driven, in the wildness of their despair, into hasty and irregular revolt against a government which had grown strong by the spoils of their industry. The means immediately at hand to quell this outbreak were insufficient, and the knowledge of this may have fed the boldness of the people, who were too ignorant to know with what tremendous force a regular government can bring its power to bear on any given point. These considerations, and anticipated pity for those who must suffer in this ill-judged attempt, were quite sufficient to disturb my thoughts, apart from any reference to my own personal safety, which it was manifest must be endangered by a desperate and ignorant multitude on the one hand, and a brutal and unscrupulous soldiery on the other. The whispered conversation of the inmates of the house, and the hum of voices from the guard without, contributed to excite me, and towards midnight I went forth upon the roof to ascertain, if possible, how matters proceeded. The moon shone brightly over the whole of that extraordinary scene—on the cottages of Gournou,

huddled in abject humility round the feet of the tall palms, between whose trunks, as between the pillars of a temple, I gazed forth on the plain beyond; on the barren rocks of the Libyan chain, that threw themselves up in fastastic shapes to the west; on the plain of Thebes, from which rose the phantom-like forms of temple, obelisk, and statue, to the south; on the precipices of Medinet Habou, that bounded the view in that direction; on the broad and placid Nile which, beneficent as a God, has given its inundations, for thousands and thousands of years, alike to just and to unjust generations; on the dim expanse of field and desert beyond, peopled with sphinxes, and clustered with temples; and on the jagged outline of the Arabian mountains, pencilled boldly against a sky that seemed heavy with stars and absolutely overcharged with light. Not a sound at first smote upon my ear as I gazed forth upon this wonderful panorama, save the murmur that arose from the armed men in the street, and the occasional barking of a dog in his sleep. At length, however, all the watchful guardians of the villages seemed on the alert, and loud and continuous howls rang round the plain of Thebes. It was evident that the insurgents were shifting their position and coming towards us. At length, indeed, they appeared in dusky masses, some on horse and some on foot, in the neighbourhood of the Memnonium. What was their object, and what their destination, we could not guess, but, passing along the border of the Necropolis, at no great distance from us, they at length disappeared, the commotion on the plain subsided, and all was once more hushed in deep repose. Soon after this, yielding to the influence of fatigue, I retired to rest.

Next morning was for a time comparatively quiet, but we were soon informed that large straggling bodies of men were approaching Gournou from the north, in the opposite direction to the movement I had seen executed in the night. The largest of them returned straight to the temple of Memnon, but several made towards us. Mistrusting their motives, the men of the village again assembled in arms; but it soon appeared that the objects of our fear were merely those who had been wounded in an attempt upon Gamounli, which had been repulsed, though not before the place was sacked. Seventeen Arabs and three soldiers had fallen in this conflict, the result of which, however, did not seem to have at all discouraged the insurgents. My host, Janni, who throughout exhibited the greatest pusillanimity, interpreted events more keenly; and, looking upon the Arabs as already defeated, actually proposed that we should fire on the bleeding wretches who were dragging themselves past. He was not, however, by any persuasion, to be induced to take the command of his men; remaining in his own house, looking out of the window, and bawling to every one to keep close. By these means he contrived to secure the contempt of the people of Gournou, and perhaps strengthened the disposition which they had begun to manifest to go over to the Prophet's party. It appeared, nevertheless, that they were by no means dazzled by his divine pretensions. They did not believe him to be inspired; and regarded the miracles related by his enthusiastic companions as so many pious frauds. Taxation, however, pressed heavily upon them; and what was wanting in credulity

was compensated by discontent; so that it soon became evident that if the insurrection could make head for any length of time, our guards would, without fail, be enlisted in its ranks. But their loyalty returned as temptation receded; and when towards evening the prophet-rebel evacuated the Memnonium, and retired southward towards Erment, they ceased for a time to waver.

Throughout next day we heard nothing but rumours of the gradual spread of the movement, of the increase of the insurgents to the number of three thousand, of the rising of the Arabs of Luxor and of Karnak, and of the flight of the governor of the former place; but no steps seemed to be taken, or contemplated, to quell the disturbance, and no soldiers appeared. Next morning, however, a force of three or four hundred men arrived from Ghizeh and Gamounli, and sacked and burned the village of Beirat, where the rebellion had commenced, after which they most unaccountably retreated. This infused new confidence into the Arabs; and, on the following morning, even the men of Gournou, to whom it had been notified that they should be exempt from the year's taxes if they remained quiet, rose and marched off to join the Prophet's army. I have no doubt that this circumstance considerably influenced our position; for, some hours after dark, two men came from Erment, where there had been a large public meeting, in which it had been proposed to murder all Englishmen. The Prophet, however, severely rebuked the person who advised the sanguinary proceeding; and, so far from giving it any countenance, sent us a letter, assuring us of his friendship, and promising us protection. This afforded us great relief, and held out hopes of safety for the future; and it will easily be perceived that, without some such pledge, our situation was most insecure and dangerous. The whole country being in a state of insurrection, it would have been madness to attempt either to ascend or descend the river. Besides, even were we to succeed in escaping downward, we knew that we should encounter a more terrible enemy than the revolted Arabs, namely, the plague, which was ravaging Cairo with unwonted violence.

We had nothing to do therefore but to remain quiet, and watch the progress of the rebellion, which continued every day on the increase. Five or six days after it first broke out, a small force advanced once more from Gamounli upon the plain of Thebes. As the news of their approach spread, all the unarmed inhabitants, the women and children, left the villages, and ran up the mountains to conceal themselves in the tombs; but the soldiers, after a skirmish near the smoking ruins of Beirat, again retreated. Not long after, the Prophet collected about a thousand of his followers, and marched upon Gamounli, which he attacked furiously in the morning, and, after fighting all day, succeeded in driving out the garrison, who cut their way through the Arabs, and retired down the river, followed by the victors.

The old sheikh, however, seemed now to be appalled at the magnitude of the enterprise he had undertaken. Instead of marching upon Siout and deciding the fate of his attempt at once, he began to give out that he had no orders to go so far, or to collect many followers about him. He

accordingly retraced his footsteps, and sent many of his men back to their villages, telling them that the great battle was to take place at the first cataract. This looked as if he were now alarmed indeed, and saw danger in pursuing his route down to Siout. We understood that the Prophet asserted he could bring down the angels from heaven to fight in his cause; and said to his followers, "It is not you who fight; I can see Mohammed and the angels fighting for us!" This they all believed; and even said, that "if cannon shot were fired at him, he would not be touched by them."

In spite, however, of these preternatural attributes, in about forty-eight hours after the successful attack upon Gamounli, the victorious Arabs retraced their steps, and passing through the plain of Thebes, went on to Esneh. Two or three days subsequent to this elapsed without any event of importance occurring; but at length the news came that a great body of soldiers, with many cannon, were marching towards Gheneh. Their approach was signalised by an instance of barbarity, intended probably to strike terror into the minds of the insurgents. Arriving at a village, some of the inhabitants of which may have joined the Prophet, they totally destroyed it, putting every soul they met—man, woman, and child—to the sword. Almost simultaneously with this exhibition of rigour, a small army of disciplined Arabs, who had been sent towards Darfour, returned to aid in quelling the insurrection, and coming to blows at Esneh, gained a great victory. The rebels were thus hemmed in on both sides and were evidently puzzled what course to pursue. Their chieftain, who had again marched towards Gheneh, crossed the river and retired upon Luxor, from whence he came over to the western side once more and went up to Erment, with the view no doubt of disengaging his rear by crushing, if possible, the division of the Pasha's army that was advancing from the south. On several successive days various skirmishes took place in which he had a decided advantage; but he at length sustained a severe check at Crocodilopolis, and a bloody defeat on the island of Rizacát, whither his forces were drawn by a manœuvre of some French officers who commanded the disciplined regiments. His fortune, he now felt, had departed from him, and many of his followers also began to lose their faith and to fall away. In spite of their success, however, the soldiers advanced very slowly from the south, and it was not until several days after that they advanced and burned Erment. It was evening when this chastisement was inflicted; and standing on the top of our house I could distinctly see the flames rising through the air and casting a deep red glow over the rocks, and the sky, and the river, and the whole country that stretched to the south of Thebes. The conflagration lasted all night, and in the morning a heavy column of smoke remained long poised above the ruined village, its summit gradually melting away through the tranquil air. Similar appearances, arising from different causes, are constantly, at this time of the year, beheld on the opposite plain between Luxor and Karnak, where the sand is blown by the Khamseen winds into pillars some six hundred feet in height, that rise perpendicularly, and, sinking gradually, vanish by imperceptible degrees.

The utmost consternation now prevailed in all the villages around, and every path was crowded with people driving their cattle, horses, camels, and asses, some over the rocky track towards Gamounli, others towards the excavations in the mountains. And now it began to be suspected that the sheikh's prophetic character was false, though few gave utterance to their thoughts, and many still continued to circulate accounts of his miracles, and dole forth the most improbable pieces of intelligence that could possibly be conceived. Sometimes a vast reinforcement was arriving from Kosseir, sometimes the Pasha had fled to Alexandria, sometimes the English had come to Cairo and had taken him prisoner. Whatever degree of credit may have been given to these reports, it is certain that Derwish Ahmed Lilwezeer did not consider that he had quite played out the game; for when two hundred Atouni Bedouins, armed with matchlocks, had joined him, he began again to assume a high tone, and sending for the Arabs who had seceded, told them that if they did not return he would burn their houses. This representation produced the desired effect, and he was enabled to appear before Gheneh with from ten to fifteen thousand men. Ahmed Pasha, who had thrown himself into the town with a large body of horse, sent a firman to the Arabs, requesting them to disperse and return to their villages. To this they replied, by a verbal message, that they should not return, and that either he must come out or they would go in. At this juncture the Essouan infantry arrived, and landing, succeeded in drawing on an attack, during which Ahmed Pasha made a sortie with two thousand six hundred horse. The rout was complete; on every side the half-armed and undisciplined Arabs gave way; and the cavalry, pursuing them, sabred an immense number; whilst others—men, women, and children, who all contributed to swell the multitude—crowded into the river, to escape being put to the sword, and were drowned.

Next day the disastrous result of the battle was known over the whole Plain of Thebes, and parties of the insurgents began to drop into Gournou, and get ready to fly to the excavations on the first appearance of the soldiers. With my glass I could see several thousand scattered Arabs retreating on the opposite side of the river, and making towards the distant mountains of the Desert. All the morning men, horses and camels, might be seen straggling in one direction across the plain. Many of the inhabitants of Luxor passed over to Gournou and took up their abode in the tombs; from one of which I counted twenty individuals coming out —a ragged, miserable-looking set of men, women, and infants. Seeing an old servant of mine among the party, I spoke to him, asking why they stopt there, and why they did not go higher up into the mountains, where there were many larger caves? He replied that they were driven thither by fear of the soldiers, from whom they considered themselves safe, for should they fire into the tombs, they would not be able to injure them, the excavations extending, with many turnings, so far into the rock. It struck me, however, that they might all be easily suffocated by burning straw at the entrance, though I did not say so, thinking they were sufficiently alarmed already.

Meanwhile, Ahmed Pasha was approaching, and his chief opponent,

the Prophet, had retired for a time into the Desert. Even now, however, he had not completely given up his cause as lost. Relying on the deep-seated hatred of the Arabs to the government which oppressed them, he once more exerted himself to bring together a force; and the people of Girgeh began, it was reported, to bestir themselves, massacring every soldier they found alone, and loudly expressing their detestation of Mohammed Ali, than whom, they said, they would rather have Sheitan himself for governor. It was evident that the young Pasha thought it prudent not to advance upon the Plain of Thebes immediately after the victory; especially when a sheikh, whom he sent to read a firman at Beirat, was seized and bastinadoed by the people.

At length, however, having left a strong garrison at Ghench, Ahmed moved with two thousand six hundred Turkish cavalry upon the Plain of Luxor; whilst the Essouan infantry came up on one side of the river in their boats, twenty-six in number, their large white sails little affected by the wind. Of the horsemen whom we saw scouring furiously along on the opposite bank, one thousand were Moors from Tunis and Tripoli, in general a powerful and ferocious set of men, cherishing a particular enmity to the Arabs. My host, Janni, was in alarm the whole day, which he spent looking through his telescope, imagining that the Arabs were returning in greater force, and fancying the bushes on the opposite mountains were horsemen. Towards evening, a courier arrived on a camel from Luxor, bringing a firman, beautifully written by Ahmed's Coptic secretary, and bearing the usual stamp of his seal or ring. It was read to the Arabs, who stood round to listen, spear in hand. When they had heard the promises it contained of pardon if they remained quiet in their villages, and the threats of utter destruction if they disobeyed, a murmur ran round this strange assembly, some inclining to submission, others to resistance. Leaving them to resolve how they might, the courier passed on towards Beirat, there to read the same firman to the people whom he might find hovering about the ruins. But these were not the only means to which the Pasha resorted to restore tranquillity; for, during his stay at Luxor, he offered two or three dollars for the life of every Arab who did not quietly return to his village; and the Bedouins in his service scoured the mountains, with considerable success, in search of victims, whose heads were brought down and sold according to the tariff established by the youthful Ahmed.

From Luxor the Pasha marched with his force towards Esneh, in order by his presence, and by other effectual means, to overawe the turbulent people. This excursion occupied five days, at the end of which, in the morning, the news was brought that the soldiers were returning on our side of the river. Upon this the greatest excitement prevailed, and many proposed to fly to the tombs, whilst others advised to stay and trust to the clemency of the Pasha. By eleven o'clock the whole pathway on the plain was covered with cavalry; these were soon followed by Ahmed himself, who arrived in his kandjia, and, landing at the usual place, caused his tent to be set up on the bank, where he passed the night. Next day I got on board my boat once more, and made preparations for continuing my

journey; but, on the following morning, it appeared that the rebellion had not been completely quelled; for the Prophet was again heard of at a village just beyond Luxor, having with him three hundred Arabs, and thirty-five disciplined infantry, deserters from Essouan. The Pasha went after them with his cavalry before sunrise. I was present when a number of deserters were brought in, fastened together by a chain round their necks, passing through a loop. A party of peasants also were seated on the ground, tied one to the other, and with their arms secured behind their backs. The young Pasha—about twenty years of age—was seated in his tent, with his khaznadar near him, on the ground; an attendant was fanning him to keep away the flies; others were standing round; all wore an air of the greatest indifference, which was not the least conspicuously exhibited by the prisoners themselves. These knew very well the fate that awaited most of them, and patiently submitted to the decrees of Providence. Next day, some of them were blown from the cannon's mouth, and their scattered limbs cast into the Nile. One Arab was bastinadoed nearly to death, and then flung down the bank, where a Turkish soldier, seeing he was not quite dead, slipped a cord round his neck, set his foot on his head, and, pulling the noose tight, strangled him, and then threw him into the river. Similar executions were more than once repeated; but the most horrible scene I witnessed occurred two or three days subsequently. Early one morning, a number of Arabs were brought in from the villages and mountains on the other side of the river. There were ninety-five of them in all, generally speaking well-made and fine-looking fellows, with scarcely any dress on except round the middle. When I saw them they were sitting very quietly on the ground, tied together by a rope passed round the arms and back of each. After contemplating their resignation for a moment with respect and wonder, I walked away along the banks of the Nile, but had not gone far when I was overtaken, and accosted by a Piedmontese officer. He told me that Ahmed Pasha had just stepped out of his tent to the place where the Arabs were huddled together, and that, after just looking at them, he had given orders for them all to be shot, *en masse!* I cannot describe the unmixed horror with which this announcement at first inspired me, nor the various emotions that immediately afterwards crowded tumultuously to my breast. Among these, two conflicting impulses soon manifested their workings. By one I was urged to return and behold the massacre, whilst the other prompted me to fly as far as possible from the scene of blood. I stood for a while irresolute, and then, disgust predominating in my mind, staggered a few paces away; but the irresistible influence of curiosity soon manifested itself, and I retraced my steps, drawn by a kind of fascination, to witness this dreadful butchery.

The unhappy victims were sitting upon the ground, most of them with folded arms, and appearing the least concerned of all present; a battalion of the newly-raised Arab infantry advanced towards them and fired, though without much effect; they fired again, both times at the word of command; and, finally closing in, again discharged their muskets. The Turkish soldiers, who were looking on, now drew their sabres and stabbed such as

struggled! I was astonished at the conduct of the unhappy prisoners—they took the whole thing so quietly! As volley after volley was poured in upon them, their heads drooped on their shoulders, and they lay down composedly to die; scarcely a cry was raised; from the colour of their skin, moreover, the blood could not be seen as it flowed forth; so that the scene, upon the whole, was not so horrible as might have been expected. Besides, my attention was to a certain extent diverted, by the only instance of resistance to what most seemed to regard as the inevitable decree of destiny that occurred. Two of the Arabs, breaking loose at the first fire, dashed into the Nile, and endeavoured to swim over to the other side; but the current proved too strong for them, propelling them back towards the side they sought to avoid, and carrying them slowly down the stream. I hoped, but in vain, that this desperate attempt would be overlooked. The swimmers were soon perceived; and, whilst the massacre continued on the bank, several shots were fired at them, and many of the Turks, who seemed to consider the affair very fine sport, took deliberate aim. The poor fellows kept constantly diving to avoid the balls, and struggling furiously towards the opposite shore. A boat now put off, and soon came up with one of them, who, though wounded, was a good swimmer; but, seemingly much exhausted, he caught hold of the boat; a soldier forthwith cleaved his skull with a sabre, and he immediately sunk: the other, after diving, came up again close by the boat, and was instantly shot through the head.

Thus terminated this bloody affair. Soon after sunset the bodies of the whole party were dragged down the bank, and thrown into the Nile. The Piedmontese officer and his friend the doctor, together with the Sardinian who commanded the battalion which shot these unfortunate Arabs, came and smoked and took coffee with us as if nothing had happened. I shall not enter into any further detail respecting the executions that followed the insurrection I have described; it will be sufficient to say that many hundreds were put to death, more for the sake of example than for punishment, since no pains were taken to identify the actual offenders. What became of the Sheikh who gave rise to the insurrection, I do not know. He probably escaped into the Desert, and put himself under the protection of some tribe of Bedouins. For myself it was with very melancholy feelings that I prepared to quit the site of the great capital of ancient Egypt.*

CHAPTER XXXII.

VOYAGE TO ESNEH—VISIT TO THE OASIS.

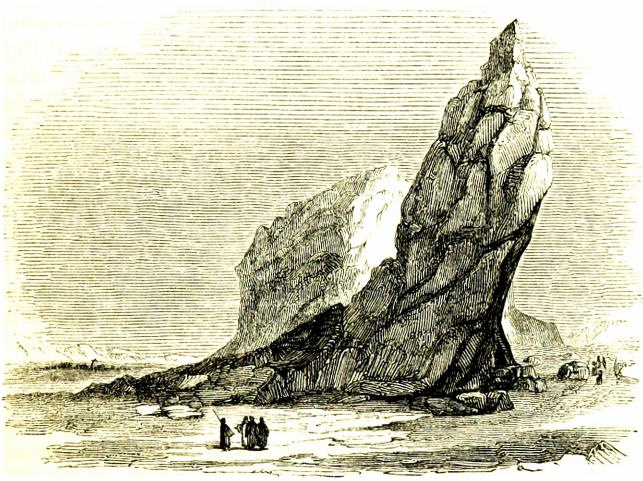
THE wind which had tempted our departure from Thebes proved weak and variable, and about sunset died totally away, constraining us to moor for the night a little to the south of Hermontis, where, according to the Arabs, the Sultan e' Timsah, or "king of the crocodiles" resides. These

* Madox.

animals, which chiefly abound in the portion of the Nile extending southward from Manfaloot, here attain an enormous magnitude; but afterwards, except, perhaps, in the immediate neighbourhood of Koom Ombos, gradually become smaller and more rare as you ascend the Nile.

At Hermontis, which formed the head-quarters of the patriotic Prophet whose exploits we have above commemorated, are the remains of a temple founded by Cleopatra, who in the inscriptions appears associated with Cæsarion, her son by Julius Cæsar. A grove of palms, files of elegant detached columns, and half-fallen architraves, group into one of the most picturesque ruin scenes in Egypt. The original plan seems to have been a naos surrounded with a peristyle, approached through a kind of court, formed of columns united by screens or dwarf walls. The elongated proportion of the columns shows the influence of foreign art.*

The scantiness of the wind compelled us to have recourse for some time to tracking. Here we saw a phenomenon in Egypt—two isolated mountains springing up from the plain, on the African bank, the one close to the



The Jebelein or Twin Rocks.

river, the other running parallel with it at a short distance to the westward. I observed the peasants busily employed in raising water for irrigation, with the lever and basket, a rude hydraulic apparatus, consisting of two uprights and a cross-beam, placed like a door-way over a narrow canal, with a pole traversing the beam, and having at one end an osier bucket, and at the other a large lump of hardened earth. As the Nile in this part never overflows, the canals are very numerous, and appear abundantly sufficient for the purposes of irrigation, the whole plain being covered

* Wathen.

with luxuriant verdure. In several places we saw plantations of the castor-oil plant; a very beautiful shrub. The oil is used by the Nubian women to soften their hair, and for many other purposes.

Soon after nightfall, as we lay-to for a short time, close to the low bank of the river, six Arabs, led by a santon, to whom they paid the greatest deference, attempted to perform the dance of the howling derwishes; a scene which had something so awfully terrific about it, that I shall never forget it. The atmosphere was dense and sultry; hollow gusts of wind moaned around us, and whirling clouds of dust rose up on all sides, scarcely permitting the pale light of a few stars to penetrate the strange obscurity. The dark jagged banks of the Nile near which our boats were anchored, appeared in an obscure and undefined outline. Close to the edge, six figures, enveloped in black clothes, flitted like shadows to and fro in the indistinct twilight. Soon they formed a circle round the naked santon, who sung in a plaintive agonising tone of voice, various deeply melancholy, but by no means unmelodious strains. The shadowy circle incessantly leaped up and then bowed down to the earth, in regular cadence, and in a hoarse, half uttered, half suppressed and indescribable tone, which resembled the howling of an infernal monster, pronounced the word "Ajuhm," with systematically increasing rapidity, till at length one after the other sunk down exhausted, and the sound died away in a death-like swoon. Many of these infatuated wretches are said often to expire in an apoplectic fit; but as this dance is considered one of exalted piety, the man who loses his life in it is regarded as a happy martyr. The ceremony, however, appeared to me like a desperate conjuration of evil spirits, or an infernal dance of demons. The awful hellishness of this scene even confounded my Greek attendant; this brave fellow, *sans peur et sans reproche*, took refuge, at the very onset of this fiendish scene, in a corner of the vessel, and fixing his eyes upon the dancers, incessantly accompanied their fearful "Ajuhm" to its very close, with an almost equally frightful howl in his own language.*

Egypt is always singular and interesting; bnt under an autumnal sunset it is beautiful. The sun sinks behind a grove of palms in a golden sky, upon which their most delicate featherings are distinctly described. A rich amber light glows over the landscape, and makes the meanest and most uncouth objects beautiful: soon the feeblest star has lighted its lamp, and the black vault of heaven seems thickly studded with brilliants. Such is the purity of the atmosphere, that you may watch a setting star till it touches the low bank of the river. Profound tranquillity reigns through the universe; or is only broken at intervals by the mellowed murmur of a distant water-wheel. The moonlight streams upon the bosom of the ancient river. A beautiful meteoric phenomenon heightens the interest of the scene. Ever and anon a bright star seems to shoot away from amongst its fixed companions—glances horizontally across the heavens, throwing off a long luminous trail, then, bursting like a rocket, leaves all nature intensely tranquil as before.

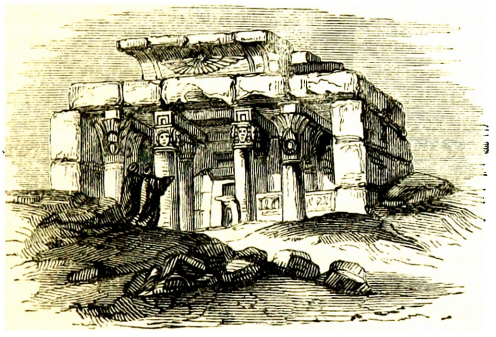
* Pückler Muskau.

"But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?"
* * * * *

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep,
Celestial voices to the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
Hymning their great Creator!"*

We arrived at Esneh about two hours after sunset. Here I heard an anecdote, illustrative of the manner in which justice is administered in this country. The boat's crew of two English travellers being engaged in a quarrel with the crew of another kandjia, were beaten by the owners, three Turkish soldiers in the service of the Pasha. To obtain redress for this insult, the travellers made application to the governor of the next town, who, for their satisfaction, immediately ordered the koorbash to be administered—not to the soldiers, who had been guilty of the outrages, but to the reis of the boat, who had been nowise implicated in the affair. He then inquired if the complainants were satisfied, which he must have done in mockery; and they, fearing that the reis might be again beaten as the proxy of the Turks, very coolly replied in the affirmative. A representation of the affair to Mohammed Ali could have procured the petty governor's recal.

Latopolis, the original name of Esneh, has been by some derived from that of a species of fish at present unknown, which, they say, was anciently worshipped in this city. But it would rather seem to signify "the city of Latona,"† the Bouto of the Egyptians, a goddess of great import in their mythology, who, it is said, possessed in Egypt an oracular shrine, celebrated for the truth of its responses, delivered probably from the identical temple the portico of which still exists. This magnificent ruin, which has perhaps obtained from travellers less notice than it deserves, must unquestionably have belonged to one of the most elegant structures in Egypt. Yet the portico, on the ceiling of which the famous Zodiac is painted, however ancient it may be, is less so than the cella, the front of which projects into the pronaos subsequently erected about it, so as to leave a small aperture between the original edifice and the more modern addition. Government having converted the portico into a warehouse, it is in some measure protected from wanton dilapidation;



Temple near Latopolis.

* Wathen. † Λητους πολις.

but as the exterior intercolumniations, originally encumbered with a mural screen, have now been built up to the architrave, the whole interior is buried in almost total darkness, and must be examined with tapers, like a hypogeum. Immense blocks of stone, resting on rafters of the same material, and extending from the façade to the cella, constitute the roof of the pronaos. The vast columns, twenty-four in number, are disposed in six rows, three on either side of the entrance. A profusion of sculpture adorns the shafts, and the capitals are exceedingly beautiful; the foliage, which in some cases represents that of the palm-tree, projecting in a series of curves, leaf behind leaf, scarcely yielding in richness to that of the Corinthian order; while others consist of a cluster of lotus leaves, sculptured with equal delicacy, and no less beautifully arranged. But although each column, viewed separately, excites our admiration, the effect of the whole is highly incongruous. This defect in Egyptian architecture appears susceptible of explanation. In a forest, the beauty of the oak seems to be enhanced by the neighbourhood of the ash or the elm, which perhaps misled the Egyptians, who thought, if the beauty of a forest consists in the variety of its trees, a portico would for the same reason be more beautiful in proportion to the dissimilarity of the columns of which it is composed. But the comparison is incorrect; for a tree is a whole, a column is not; it is but as a branch; and, until we shall desire to see the sycamore, the chesnut, the ash, and the lime, engrafted upon the oak, a portico consisting of a monstrous combination of several orders of architecture, can never be considered other than a splendid toy.

Sir Frederic Henniker comes to the same conclusion. "The capitals," he says, "display the taste of the Egyptians in their regular irregularity, like the roses of a Roman arch-way; variations of the same subject, with a family likeness throughout the whole. There is not one of them that I would wish to be absent, and yet the want of uniformity destroys the effect of all—like a dozen of various, though good wines, mixed together.

"The portico has, by some travellers, been considered more pleasing than that of Denderah, though the figures, they confess, are not so exquisitely finished. Isis has a bewitching half modesty in her face. Her general figure is spare and delicate, and pleases me, notwithstanding Winkelmann's observation, that the Egyptians did not sacrifice to the graces." *

It being market day, the bazār, to which we proceeded on quitting the temple, was crowded with buyers, sellers, barbers, &c. We found provisions extremely cheap; beef about three-farthings per pound; butter, or rather *ghee*—a government monopoly—dearer, the price being as much as threepence halfpenny per pound; bread and onions very cheap; good tobacco about eightpence per pound; Mokka coffee, another government monopoly, very dear, at least one shilling and ninepence per pound. A dancing-girl in the bazār, who took a liking to my gloves, was extremely desirous of obtaining them as a present; but I told her the sun of Esneh was too warm to allow of my walking about with naked hands. Upon hers it had already done its worst, for they were nearly black. She had never seen gloves before, and took mine at first to be the natural skin of my

* Henniker.

hands. When I drew one of them off for the purpose of taking some money out of my purse, she started back in extreme terror, imagining I had begun the process of flaying myself before her. The market-people

Egyptian Barber.

who stood round laughed heartily at her fright, though they were not a jot more familiar than she was with the use of the admired article of dress. Here I saw a very pretty genteel Arab girl, about twelve years old, nearly as fair as an European, buying little cheeses, like those of Neufchatel. She was extremely well dressed, and followed by a female slave. The market was abundantly supplied. Heaps of corn, dates, peas, lentils, onions, and vegetables of all kinds, literally encumbered the streets; and the peasant girls, here the principal merchants, were fat, good-looking, and merry. Having had some dealing with his Highness's representatives in this town, it was necessary to follow the *mallim* or waiter to the fort, where two or three small pieces of ordnance overawe the navigators on the Nile. They would produce great alarm, and might do serious mischief to a fleet of Arab boats daring enough to plot rebellion against the Pasha; and it is pretty certain that a single discharge would bring down this crazy fortress about the ears of its defenders.* Here we found the Coptic scribes seated at dinner on the floor, round two or three trays extremely well covered, and were invited to join them. The principal course consisted of fish, fried in oil, and of an exceedingly good quality; and their bread also was excellent. The costume of the Copts consists of long black robes, and black turbans; and this, with their coarse angular features and sallow complexions, gives them a funereal appearance.

The ancient Memlooks, during their intestine dissensions, and their wars with the Porte, and the viceroys of Egypt, frequently took refuge in

* Olin.

this town, which, by its favourable position, and its distance from Cairo, secured their independence. They had embellished with a garden the place of their voluntary exile: we went there to enjoy the coolness of the evening, and found the grapes of exquisite flavour. We but rarely meet with this fruit in Egypt, which, to judge from the pictures in the catacombs representing vintage scenes, must have been formerly cultivated there. Islamism, without doubt, first checked the culture of the vine, yet I do not think that, in general, the soil of Egypt is favourable to it; inundation and drought are equally fatal. Still the wines of Egypt enjoyed a good reputation in ancient times, particularly those of Mareotis and Coptos. It is at Esneh that we find the best camels, which are bred by the Arabs of the tribe of Ababdé, and by them brought here for sale.*

Esneh, which probably contains about 5000 inhabitants, has the usual characteristics of an Egyptian town—mountains of rubbish outside, and abundance of filth within, animated and vocal, with a half naked indolent crowd, and a host of yelping dogs.†

When the French were in Egypt, the remains of a small temple existed north of the town, and another ruin on the opposite bank of the Nile; but Mohammed Ali's *regeneration* of Egypt has proved the destruction of these, and many other monuments of her ancient glory. Their materials have been worked up into factories; and tall white chimneys, rivalling those of Leeds and Manchester, rise from among dingy huts of clay.‡

As we have now reached that part of the valley of the Nile from which travellers, who desire to visit the Great Oasis, usually strike off, I shall here introduce the account of the journey of Sir Frederic Henniker, to that dependency of it called Bæris, premising some remarks on the general system of Oases, existing in the western desert. They have been long happily compared to fertile islands rising from the bosom of immense seas of sand. There are five in the Libyan desert: the first, beginning with the most southerly, is that of Karghé, on the same parallel with Thebes; it is separated from Egypt by a tract of desert, about a hundred miles in breadth, and stretches north and south above sixty miles. The ancients called it Oasis Magna. Fifty miles to the west lies the Oasis of Dahkel, in length about thirty miles, in breadth fifteen. Descending towards the Mediterranean, we meet with the little Oasis of Farafreh, about a hundred and sixty miles from the river; that of Beryeh (Oasis Parva) distant some eighty or ninety miles from Lower Egypt; and, lastly, that of Siwah, celebrated in antiquity by the name of the Oasis of Jupiter Ammon, and by the pilgrimage undertaken by Alexander to the temple of this deity. Situated in about the same latitude as the Fayoum, it is separated from it by a distance of two hundred and fifty miles; it is fifteen miles in length by ten in breadth. These Oases contain in general very fertile land, producing sugar, coffee, and madder, but principally indigo. No similar spots are supposed to be found in the eastern desert; yet it appears to me highly probable, that many such exist there, though of

* Baroness Von Minutoli. † Olin. ‡ Wathen.

inferior dimensions. At all events, there are several low valleys gifted with a certain degree of fertility, and covered more or less thickly with acacia and other trees. How many of these there may be, has not yet been ascertained, but the traveller who should undertake to examine and describe them, would probably make many discoveries to reward his toilsome adventure. Properly, the Oases of Libya make no part of Egypt, but as they are, and always have been, dependent on it, I thought it would not be desirable to omit all notice of them.

Having been provided, says Henniker, with five camels, a certain stock of rice, biscuits and coffee, with four goat-skins for water, I prepared to start. The animal that was to carry me was so obliging as to kneel down, without which complaisance, or a ladder, I should never have been able to get upon his back; but the moment he felt a foot over him, he sprang up, and left me on the ground. The Arabs laughed, and told me that that was the usual commencement.

Our road lay alongside the river as far as Jebelein, twelve miles north of Esneh, and at this place we suffered our first stoppage. We were detained four hours, for no visible reason, till supper came: this consisted of bread, soup, rice, roast chickens, and vegetables, all mixed together in a large wooden bowl. I offered backsheish to my host, but he declared that it would be shameful to receive pay; at the same moment my hand opened, and the sum of three shillings became visible, and my friend accepted the money in opposition to his conscience—it is the value of a sheep.

At length the water-skins were filled, I was safely mounted, and we made a second start. Our route lay west, across a flat sandy plain, on which, after three hours' march, we halted for the night. Here the Arabs performed vespers; and there being no water to spare for their ablutions, they went through that part of the ceremony with sand. The sand is very soft, the sky bright, and I slept very comfortably *sub dio*. Within three hours after midnight we resumed our journey, and continuing our route west, ascended the Libyan chain at about twenty-four miles' distance from the river. At mid-day we halted for an hour, and in the course of the afternoon came to a quantity of broken pottery, such as generally indicates an ancient site; it was distant about fifteen hours from the Nile, and I should imagine it to have been a "station." About seven o'clock we finished our day's work; the camels having performed double march without having tasted water, and having nothing to eat but dry chopped straw, with a little barley in it. The motion of a camel is very disagreeable: he goes whizzing through the air, though he does not advance three miles per hour; at every step he throws his rider backwards and forwards, and causes nearly the same sensation as a rocking boat.

There was no variation next day. I was already land-sick, and calculated that in each journey of fifteen hours I was bumped, like a schoolboy, fifty-eight thousand times. Nothing is so tedious, indeed, as the first day's camel riding, except a continuation of it; and nothing so wearying as a camel's walking pace, except a camel's trot. During the fifty-two hours that I was on the back of the sulky animal, I had been

unwillingly endeavouring to make him *mend* his pace; but, equally indifferent to threats or caresses, he refused to go beyond a walk: at length he set off voluntarily in a trot, and, in spite of my utmost exertions to restrain him, he brought me to a spring, and there he deposited me, almost shaken to pieces, like an overboiled fowl. We had performed, in three days, a journey that usually employs a week; and, during this, the camel did not taste water—a draught in three days being quite sufficient for a camel—my guide told me, in three weeks, or even three months, provided he can get green food. By the wayside we found many skeletons of camels; the animal on which I rode became exceedingly offensive as to his breath, and when he came within three or four hours of water, I found it impossible to retard him.

The track from Esneh to the Oasis Bæris, is marked with piles of stones; but the bones of animals, and the setting sun, form as sure a guide. There is one spot in particular abounding in bones, and amongst them old Hassan pointed out those of a camel that he had often accompanied through the desert; and near them the grave of its master—the camel had died of thirst, and its owner had killed himself by its side. Such anecdotes are not very uncommon. A camel, or a horse, is generally the life, or the means of living, to a man and his family. The thoughts and fancies suggested by passing the night in such a situation, surrounded by the mouldering remains of men and animals, have been wrought up with singular felicity into a poem by Freiligrath; and because of the force and truth of its delineations, I shall introduce it here, in the admirable version which appeared in a late number of the *Foreign Quarterly Review*.

THE GHOST-CARAVAN.

'Twas in the desert's depths we took our night-rest on the ground,
Our steeds unbridled, and by each a Bedouin sleeping sound;
Afar the moonbeams gleamed upon the long low hills of Nile,
Round us white bones of camels strewed the sands for many a mile.

I slept not: for a pillow my light saddle propped my head;
A wallet, with my store of dates, served in a bolster's stead;
My caftan was my coverlet; and ready to my hand
My naked sword, my lance and gun, lay by my couch of sand.

All silent, save the flickering flame, or crack of thorn in burning;
Save the hoarse croak of some vulture to his eyrie late returning;
Save the fitful stamp of hoofs in sleep among our tethered cattle;
Save the hasty clutching of a lance by one who dreams of battle.

At once the earth is rocking, ghastly vapours wrap the sky,
Across the waste, in frantic haste, affrighted wild beasts fly;
The horses snort and plunge; our sheikh grasps the banner—like a man
Unnerved, he drops it, muttering, "Lord, the ghostly-caravan!"

It comes. The phantom drivers lead the camels with their freight
Of lovely women, all unveiled, throned in voluptuous state.
Next after them walk maidens bearing pitchers, like Rebecca
At the fountain; horsemen follow, and they gallop on for Mecca.

Still others, still, past counting; ever endless seems the train.
Look! look! the bones around us strewn are camels once again;
And whirling up in dusky wreaths, fast changes the brown sand
To men, that seize the camel's rein each in his dusky hand.

For this the night, when all o'er whom the sand-flood ever heaved,
Whose wind-tossed dust this day, belike, unto our tongues hath cleaved,
Whose crumbling skulls our coursers' hoofs beat flat upon the plain,
Arise and march, to kneel and pray at Mecca's holy fane.

Still others, still; the hindmost of the train not yet have past,
And back, even now, with slackened rein, come the foremos' trooping fast.
O'er Afric's breadth, from Cape de Verd to the shores of the Red Sea,
They've galloped, ere my struggling horse from the foot-rope could get free.

The horses, ho!—they 're breaking loose:—quick, each man to his own!
For shame! like sheep, by lions scared, why quake ye so and groan?
Though they press you close, though their floating robes your very beards are brushing,
Shout, Allah! Allah! and away the spectre host goes rushing.

Stand fast, till in the morning breeze your turban feathers stream:
Glad cheer will come with morning's breath, with morning's ruddy gleam.
One beam of day, and dust are they, these pilgrims of the night,—
And see, it dawns! with joyous neigh my courser greets the light.

We descended the Libyan chain early on the morning of the fourth day, and at sunset dismounted at the first verdure of the Oasis. Bæris is the name of this "island of the Desert," which consists of a few springs rising at various distances, in an extent of many miles, and each enabling a few outcasts of the world to cultivate a little corn and dates. As to antiquities, there is a small temple, paltry and unfinished, to see which I endured fifty hours' bumping, besides returning, and the whole in a perpetual state of fusion; the water in the goat-skins had been churned rancid; the mirage was doubly tantalising; and all the springs of the Oasis tasted of the nether world. The fountain by which we first reposed was warm and sulphurish, but irrigated half an acre of land. There was a house upon the estate, but it was deserted in consequence of a ruffian having carried off the owner's daughter; a sentinel was in attendance every evening to protect the crop from the gazelles: the man on duty informed me that Siout was five days distant, that he had once been there, but should never go again, as the people were not human, having demanded payment for bread.

Next day, as soon as it was light, we descried a hill surmounted by cottages and palm-trees, distant about three hours. In our way thither, two men with matchlocks came out to meet us, and finding that we did not come to collect taxes, or with other hostile intentions, saluted us with a *feu de joie*. The report spread through the village, and, on our approach, we found all the inhabitants assembled on the tops of their houses. The heads of the females were ornamented with shells, in the same manner as those of the Egyptians are with money; and these shells, I believe, are similar to those that do pass for money.

We desired to be conducted to the Sheikh, and alighted at a house which was not so bad as any of the others; part of the interior was white-washed, and on this was scrawled, in red paint, a verse of the Koran. This is the coronet of a hajji—the lord of the village had suffered the martyrdom of a pilgrimage to Mecca, and considered himself amply rewarded by being called a saint, and being allowed, as is in general use throughout Switzerland, to write a religious sentence on his house. The Sheikh received us very hospitably, and spread a mat for us on a mud divan,

raised within the portal or hall of strangers; but he could not allow us to step beyond the second threshold, as that part of the house was the *sanctum sanctorum*—it contained the saint's harem. The first subject of conversation was taxes: even Bæris, divided from the world, has not escaped the care of the Pasha; the people are compelled to pay a yearly rent of some dollars; and they requested me, being an *Engilitz*, to have it mitigated. I was asked twenty times if I was an Englishman, and having sworn to it, a man brought a soldier's musket, and pointing to the number of the regiment, exclaimed, "Engilitz! Engilitz!" seven or eight times, raising his voice to a pitch of pride and self-congratulation. A number of medals were brought to me, but none of any consequence: under pretence of examining them, I put on a pair of green spectacles, and was immediately supposed to be a conjuror—it was a foolish joke. I lost my spectacles.

In the evening I was visited by the greater part of the village, and among the crowd came a man to whom all gave place. He had no sooner got pretty close to my ear, than he commenced making a great noise, at which everybody, except myself, was highly delighted. The man, to my astonishment, was grunting out a song, and expecting backshiesh. I gave him money immediately, on condition that he would not sing any more. The company were surprised at my want of taste, but part consoled themselves by laughing at the enraged musician.

On the following morning, I requested a guide to conduct me to the temple. Two were given me; when, seeing that I carried my fowling-piece, they desired me to wait till they had put on their guns, which they showed me were loaded with ball. We walked about ten miles south-east across the sand, and here we came to a spring, a few huts, and a little verdure. Near this was a temple almost buried in sand, though its defects were not hidden. This fabric differs in many respects from the temples on the Nile. It is a small building, composed of petty blocks of stone. The pillars are only two feet six inches in diameter, and even these, instead of being formed of one solid block, are constructed of millstones. The sacred writing is scarcely begun, but the vanity of the founder has taken care to see that a long inscription, with his name upon it, was completed.

How can we expect a temple of consequence in the middle of a desert, where water is as scarce as it is necessary; where the population never could have been great, where great works never could have been achieved, or ever required? My incredulity as to Meroe and Jupiter Ammon gains strength. The surface of the earth in the vicinity of the temple is very remarkable. It is covered with a lamina of salt and sand mixed, and has the same appearance as if a ploughed field had been flooded over, then frozen, and the water drawn off from under the ice.

Encamped near one of the springs was a caravan of Jelabi, or slave-pedlars, who are in the habit of trafficking between Darfour and Cairo. The company consisted of about thirty men, and as many four-footed beasts, besides a few women, who were considered fine specimens. They had been bought themselves, in the first instance, as slaves, but having gained the affection of their masters, they accompanied them in their journeys, and were used as decoys.

From these slave-pedlars I purchased a pair of sandals—the inconvenience of boots and shoes in travelling over sand is obvious. It always compelled me to go barefooted. These sole-preservers are very ingeniously formed of one piece, excepting a thong not two inches in length. The leather is cut to the shape of the foot, but so much larger as to allow straps to be pared at the sole, and with this are contrived fastenings similar to those of a skate. I procured also some tamarind cakes, which might be called portable sherbet, for they render even brackish water cool and agreeable.

I should imagine the people of Bæris to have been, until lately, the poorest and the happiest in the world: he that has no land shares equally the labour and the produce of him that has. All are content, except with taxes; taxes beget industry, industry begets money, and money begets evil: luxury, pride, and envy will soon grow up amongst them. The stamped leather of Charles would, not long since, have been sufficient for them, but now that they trade with foreign towns, they would rather have a piece of dirty Turkish copper than a quartern loaf; and their knives are always ready to take a slice off a Spanish dollar, for when they cannot give change, they cut the piece into halves and quarters. They have not, however, got so much money as to have no charity; for when I called for my bill, and the Sheikh enumerated the chickens, dates, sheep, and brandy, he omitted bread; and when I reminded him that we had had seven days' rations for seven people, he told me that it was "not the custom to receive money for supplying a traveller with the staff of life."

During my stay, I had used my utmost endeavours to purchase a head-dress of shells, but could not obtain either the object of my desire, or the reason why; at length, on the point of going away, when all the village were collected round me, I threw some half-farthings amongst them for a scramble. This act of generosity had such an effect upon them, that a man told me he would gladly let me have his daughter's *coiffure*, but he knew that whenever I should look upon it in England, and should wish for his daughter, that she would immediately go flying through the air to me.

Besides the temple above-mentioned, my guide informed me that there was a smaller one about two days' south, and that the great Oasis Karghé is four days distant; but I had already determined to retrace my steps rather than trust to evils that I knew not of. However, previous to leaving the Oasis, I took a few hours' ramble with my gun, and found a snipe, an owl, two Royston crows, and some partridges.

From Bæris I made my way back to Jebulein, during which journey nothing particular occurred, except the bumping; and nothing interesting or amusing, excepting a *feu d'artifice* of electricity, and a fight between two of the camel-drivers. One night, preparatory to repose, I was about to spread a sheet of common white linen upon the sand, and shaking it rather violently for that purpose, observed that it threw forth a flash of fire. This I repeated several times, and found such amusement as is to be found in the gardens of Tivoli, or in the heavens on a summer evening. The Arabs imagined it to be produced by the rays of the sun collected during the day. As we drew towards the end of our journey, the two elder of the

camel-drivers quarrelled. From words they proceeded to blows; and were in the act of pulling beards, when I desired my dragoman to horsewhip them both, and ascertain the cause of their dispute. It appeared, that as we were on the point of separating, it was necessary that I should be presented with a supper, and that the Arabs in question were contending for the honour of furnishing the entertainment. Now, as I would not suspect them capable of fighting for the bare lucre of three shillings, I desired that each of them should bring me supper sufficient for the whole party, six; this they did, and shared the "honour" between them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM ESNEH TO ES-SOUAN.

THE wind springing up early, we departed before day; the kandjia proceeding with an unwonted degree of rapidity, and the ruins on both sides of the river—Eileithyias on the east, Edfou on the west, and, farther on, the famous quarries of Hajjar Silsilis—strongly invited us to land.

My visit to Eileithyias, now El-Higgs, though made on my return, may be introduced here. From Edfou we descended the river to El-Higgs, the ancient Eileithyias. The north-wind blowing impetuously nearly all day, rendered rowing almost impracticable; we reached the site of the ancient city late in the afternoon. It is enclosed by a prodigious brick wall, thirty feet in thickness. On our way to the grottoes we traversed the enclosed space; where all traces of dwellings have long disappeared, and the ground is covered with a plant called by the Arabs Bellyé-hah, somewhat resembling senna, but so bitter that even the camel refuses to feed on it. The temples, in one of which human victims were immolated to Boubasta, have now been reduced to shapeless heaps of stones; not a column being left standing. The sepulchral grottoes, the only objects at Eileithyias which the traveller need pause to examine, we found in the southern face of the mountain about two miles north-east of the city, and are extremely numerous, though three only deserve particular attention. And indeed when I had beheld the private tombs of Gournou, even these so much vaunted by travellers, appeared to lose much of their importance. Being insignificant in dimensions their only merit consists in the scenes represented on the walls, which, however contemptible as works of art, are not without interest regarded as illustrations of Egyptian manners.

The paintings, now much mutilated, are various, and were, perhaps, as Hamilton conjectures, intended to describe, in a pictorial narrative, the series of events, or rather occupations, of which the history of the inmate consisted: all of a rural nature, reaping, winnowing, pulling and unrolling flax, fishing, fowling, and the merry labours of the vintage. The third of the greater tombs, reckoning from the river, appears to have chiefly interested Hamilton; the only fault of whose elaborate and masterly

description is, that it gives a far too favourable idea of these grottoes. I chiefly confine myself to the first hypogeum, in which beginning, with the artist, at the exterior extremity of the left hand wall, we find, in the second compartment, a carriage drawn by two horses, apparently waiting for the owner; with a groom on foot holding the reins and repressing the ardour of his steeds. Next occurs a company of reapers, with sickles in their hands, in a field; where, to dispel any ideas of pastoral simplicity and rural happiness, to which our ignorant admiration of remote ages and their patriarchal manners might give birth, we discover, close behind, the overseer, brandishing a whip, like a negro-driver; the wisdom of the Egyptians having been able to discover no other excitement to labour than flogging. The corn having been thrashed and winnowed in the field, as is the present practice of the Arabs, it is conveyed to the granary in large baskets, slung upon poles, and carried between two men. Women, like Ruth in the field of Boaz, are next seen gleaning up the scattered ears into small baskets. Then follows a large chasm in the wall.

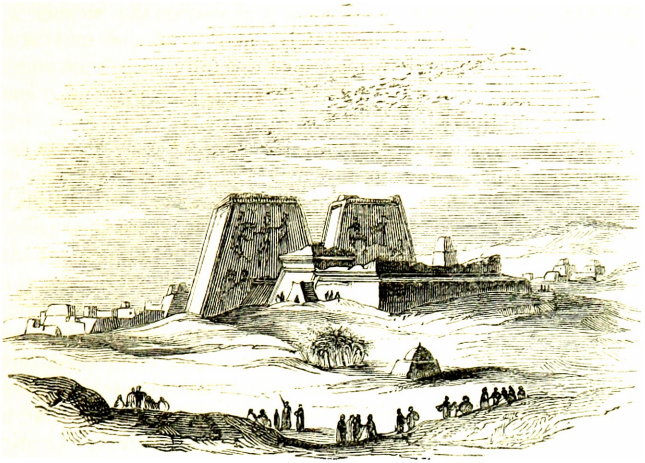
We must now suppose the corn to be safely housed, and preparations making for the harvest-home. The President Goguet's commiseration is excited at finding no mention of game or ragouts among the descriptions of patriarchal feasts in the sacred writings, and, from this circumstance, infers that such viands were unknown in those early ages. But the natives of Eileithyias were not quite so simple in their taste; for we see the sportsman returning from the chase, with his bow and quiver in his hand, and a well filled game-bag slung across his shoulder. Next comes the feast. Women, according to some historians, had in ancient Egypt, as at Sparta, the most complete ascendancy over their husbands, whose houses and fortune they governed despotically. Here both sexes, though not seated together, appear to be on terms of perfect equality; the male guests, sixteen in number, being ranged on chairs, on one side of the apartment, while the women, likewise sixteen, occupy the other. The master of the house, who mingles not with the guests, occupies a throne in one end of the apartment, and beside him, on the same seat, is his wife, with her right arm about his neck. Before them are several domestics waiting their orders, among whom are two female musicians; one seated on the ground, playing on a harp of seven strings, which rests upon her knees; while the other touches a four-chorded crescent-shaped instrument, held awkwardly on the shoulder. In the middle of the banqueting-room, on a large table piled with provisions, we observed a bull's head, cooked with the horns on; and beside it a whole quarter of the same animal: from which it is quite clear that the Egyptians ate the relations of their god Apis, though they might not choose to devour the divinity himself. Piles of fruit of various kinds are on the table for the dessert. The men, attended upon by two female-slaves, have each a lotus in their hand, and appear exceedingly grave; but their more vivacious moieties, who are honoured with ten attendants, seem, in many instances, to have cast their lotuses on the ground, and are laughing, and clapping their hands, delighted with the music or the song. The hair of the master and the other men is twisted into small ringlets, in the modern Nubian fashion; but that of the ladies

is either arranged smooth, or covered by their head-dress. As the mistress of the feast is placed on her lord's left hand, the other ladies, arranged in front of her, are necessarily seated on the right of theirs. In the lower compartment, now extremely mutilated and imperfect, are the figures of cows and other animals; and on the sides of the niche, where was formerly a sitting statue, now broken, are various figures, some kneeling, others playing upon musical instruments before the master of the tomb and his wife.

But at length Thoth Psychopompos knocks at the rich man's door to conduct his spirit to Amenti. His *domus et placens uxor* are resigned; the soul, according to its deeds, migrates into a cat, a hog, a vulture, or an ibis, to accomplish, in successive transmigrations, the revolution of the Great Year; while the body, that it may be entire at its owner's return, is delivered over to the embalmers. We see the mummies swathed, bandaged, and stretched upon a couch, with various female mourners—hired ones, perhaps—weeping round it on their knees. The yellow chest, in which it is to be borne to its long home, being brought in procession move placed in it, is laid on a lion-shaped bier; the funeral and the mummy along. In a small sledge drawn by men, a seated figure, the heei, perhaps, of the deceased, precedes the mummy-chest; they arrive at the sacred river; the coffin, the mourners, the attendants, embark in boats, drawn along the shore by a cow—the cord being fastened to her horns—several men assisting. In a compartment adjoining, a man, with a globe on his head, is seated on an urn, and two figures, probably of priests, are pouring libations over him. Near them, towards the left, another person is delineated cutting up an animal, possibly for the funeral feast; for the old Egyptians, like the Irish, invariably made merry at a wake. Proceeding into the third tomb, we observe, in the niche, a man sitting between two women, who have been supposed to be his wives: but did the old Egyptians allow of polygamy? The scenes here represented exactly resemble those above described; excepting that, in addition to the musicians, there are ghawazee, who perform in light pantaloons, or without any, in a style of the utmost indecency, while ladies look on seeming to enjoy the exhibition. Manners, therefore, were nearly the same in the days of the Pharaohs as in those of Mohammed Ali: female dancers still perform at feasts in Egypt, and ladies not only regard their performance, but learn to perform in the same style. Among the musicians, who are all females, several are observed playing on the sistrum.

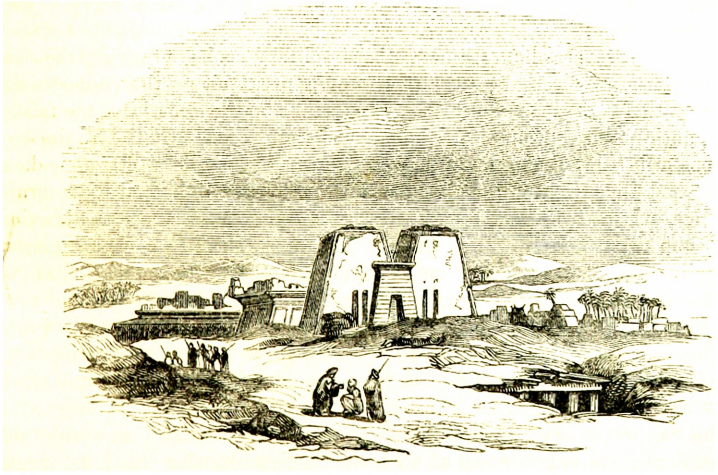
The lofty propylon of Apollinopolis Magna is visible from the river, looking more like a fortress than the appendage to a place of worship. A little above Esneh the sacred valley is greatly narrowed, the desert, in many places, reaching almost to the water's edge; until at length, at Hajjah Silsilis, or the "rock of the chain," the mountains on either side approach the stream, leaving no room for vegetation, and the Nile, straitened in its bed, roars and hurries along with prodigious velocity; so that, though aided by a strong wind, it was with difficulty we could stem the current. Black barren rocks, hewn in many places into catacombs, overhang the stream, which eternally foams and roars around their bases.

Here the hills are greatly diversified in aspect, rising into numerous peaks, divided from each other by lateral valleys, extending far into the desert.



Temple of Edfou from the North.

All this day the atmosphere was filled with fine sand, which, driven along by the wind, had, at a distance, the appearance of mist; while numerous flights of wild geese, and large snow-white storks, crowded the sandy isles.



Ruins of Edfou from the South.

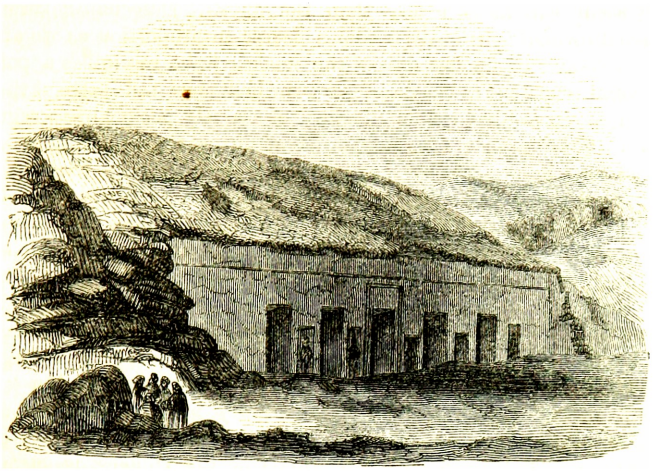
We arrived at Fares soon after dark, having made upwards of fourteen leagues,—the longest day's sailing since we had been on the river.

I shall here introduce an account of my visit to the quarries of Hajjah Silsilis, which I examined on my voyage down the Nile. We landed at the foot of the eastern mountains, and found the most extensive and extraordinary quarries in Egypt, perhaps in the world. Though the excavations begin not immediately, marks of the tool are everywhere visible, and we therefore examined carefully each rent and opening in the mountain. No monuments existing above ground convey so grand an idea of the labours of the Egyptians as these quarries, the most remarkable of all their works. Passages wide as streets cut in the rock, rising perpendicularly to the height of fifty or sixty feet on either side, sometimes straight, at other times winding, extend from the brink of the river into the very bowels of the mountain, where the rock has been cut away and spaces cleared equal in dimensions to the greatest squares in London. Towards the north are seen innumerable chambers, like the dwelling-places of the Titans, and prodigious colonnades, extending round the base of the mountains. The rough-hewn irregular roof is supported by huge square or polygonal columns, of solid rock, in many cases eighty or a hundred feet in circumference. On the slope of the mountain, overlooking the river, I found the sphinx described by Hamilton, but its head has been broken off. The crio-sphinxes I could nowhere discover. Enormous blocks of stone, completely severed from the mountain, are placed upon smaller ones, ready to be removed; and others, still more vast, had been cut and carried away, the places whence they were taken exceeding forty feet in length. The Arab who accompanied me, astonished at the extent and depth of the quarries, which would have furnished materials for all the cities of the East, exclaimed, "Wallah (by God)! if those kafirs had existed up to the present time, they would have cut away every vestige of the mountain!"

I remained several hours among these solitary rocks, admiring the deep narrow passages, resembling the streets of a great city—the endless excavations—the prodigious mounds thrown forth from the quarries—the tablets—the antique inscriptions—the huge blocks of stone. In the ravines on the eastern side of the mountain I for some time lost my attendant, despatched in search of a particular avenue loosely indicated by a former traveller, while I myself continued my researches in another direction. Sometime after I found him among the rocks, staring, pale, a ludicrous personification of terror; and on inquiring the reason, he replied, that in a small cavity of the hill he had suddenly encountered a lion. Fear chained him to the spot. His eyes grew dim (perhaps he closed them); but finding the monster make no attempt to devour him, he ventured to regard it more narrowly, and discovered it to be a camel, lying down and eating straw among the rocks!

The day drawing towards its close, we crossed to the western bank, where numerous quarries and small rock temples likewise exist, apparently the more ancient works. Here, near the northern extremity of the strait, we observed, in one of the rude hypogea, a few remarkable groups and figures. The temple, consisting of two chambers, a greater and a less, is entered by five doorways, in the spaces between which deep niches contain

a number of figures in alto rilievo, too much mutilated to allow of our determining whether they were gods or mortals. In the adytum, as in the Nubian rock temples, is a large niche containing seven figures, repre-



Tombs in the Quarries of Silsilis.

sented standing on a stone bench, originally executed coarsely, and now wantonly mutilated. On the northern wall I observed Isis, Osiris, Bouto, Athor, and other deities, moving in the train of Anubis. On the side of one of the doorways is a human figure, and what seemed to be a horse's head, greatly defaced. In another part Isis and Osiris, to whom a votary is making an offering of three lotuses and a child's head, with a tuft of hair on the crown as worn at present. On the opposite side a figure presents to the same divinities the symbol of the double-sexed god; from all which it would appear that these rock temples were dedicated to the worship of divinities analogous in character to Kal and Kali, whose horrid altars have always been smeared in India with human blood.

Next morning the wind still continuing, the Arabs were stirring before dawn; I also followed their example, and having dressed and breakfasted by lamp-light, was walking on a low sand bank in the river when the sun rose. These islands are the usual haunts of the crocodiles; but as they love to bask in the heat, and have an aversion to cold, there is little danger of encountering them early in the morning, or when the wind blows. In fact, they never seem to rise out of the water but when the surface of the Nile resembles that of a pond, and the whole sandy shore is glittering in the sun, when you see them lying in troops along the edge of the stream. Upon the whole, they would appear to be neither very voracious nor destructive, or familiarity dissipates the dread which their appearance is calculated to inspire; for both women and children fearlessly approach the

places where they lie, while various kinds of water-fowl settle in large flights close by their side. The weather for some time has been wonderfully beautiful. Day after day the sun rises and sets in unclouded brilliance; or, if a few light vapours appear, they only serve, by contrast, to display more strikingly the rich deep blue of the firmament; and the nights seem still more lovely than the days. Descending through an atmosphere which constantly becomes clearer in proportion as we are more closely hemmed in by the desert, the moon's light resembles a pale sunshine; and when the moon disappears, the brilliance and lustre of the stars, many of which are not visible in Europe, scarcely permit us to regret her absence. I know not to what degree of purity the atmosphere in high latitudes may be brought by the intense frosts of winter; Niebuhr was of opinion that the stars shone more brightly in Norway than in the Arabian Desert; but though the cold nights of the north may also have their charms, it is certain that in no European country, with which I am acquainted, has the firmament ever appeared so thickly strewed with glittering fires as in these almost tropical regions, where perhaps the air is no less purified by the elaboration of dew than by frosts in the precincts of the arctic circle. All the stars and planets appeared to be of greater magnitude, but particularly Venus, the loveliest and brightest amongst the "host of heaven," whose liquid brilliance and beauty might almost excuse the adoration of the idolaters of old. As the peasantry retire very early to rest, the night, even in the neighbourhood of the villages, is surprisingly tranquil; though if you ascend any eminence soon after dusk, numerous small clusters of lights are beheld twinkling afar, like bogfires on the plain, marking the sites of the different villages. But these soon disappear, one after the other; and nothing then remains to remind you of being in an inhabited country, save the occasional barking of a dog in some neighbouring hamlet or sheep-cote.

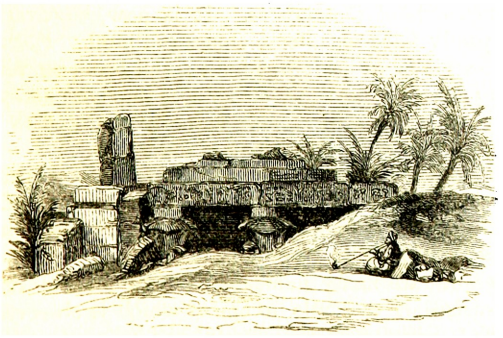
The Arab boatmen, like the Hindûs on the Ganges, love to cook and eat their meals on shore, even at night. Last evening, while sailing between the dark rocks of Gebel Silsilis, we observed one solitary kandjia, moored close to the land, whose crew, having kindled a large fire high up in a ravine, where they were sheltered from the wind, were seen moving to and fro before the flames, while their supper was preparing, half naked, like so many savages. The tradition which explains why these wild hills have been denominated the "Rock of the Chain," is most probably founded in truth. Formerly, according to the Arabs, during the times when Egypt was a prey to anarchy, a tribe of fierce banditti, inhabiting the catacombs, caverns, and quarries, so abundantly found here, extended a large iron chain across the Nile, by means of which they could intercept, when they pleased, any vessel sailing up and down. The Arabs are an inventive and poetical people. They know, after their fashion, how to explain everything. Even the cry of the curlew, which they call "karawan," has, they say, a solemn meaning, when translated into human language. Impressed with a due sense of the power and majesty of the Creator, this bird, in its solitary flight among the rocks, thus addresses the Deity: "Lak, lak, lak, la shouak, kalak, fi 'l mulk;" that is, "To thee,

to thee, to thee belongs the sovereignty of the world, without partner or companion."

The wind, which yesterday blew with so much violence that the Nile was covered with large waves, in which the kandjia rolled and pitched as in a stormy sea, has to-day forsaken us, so that there is scarcely a breath stirring, or the slightest ripple on the water. Were the navigation of the Nile in the hands of more observing men, it might perhaps be found, that, owing to the direction of the rocky chains of the desert, or some other cause at present unknown, particular parts of the river are liable to frequent and strong winds, while in others calms very commonly prevail. Near Edfou, for example, where we were driven along by a violent gale from the north-west, I was assured by Suleiman, who had been ten times up the country, that he had never failed to encounter a similar wind; and accordingly, on our return, we found it still blowing. The same thing happens near Wady Halfa, in Nubia. A diligent survey of the structure of the surrounding country might throw some light on the causes of these phenomena, unless we suppose them to have been accidental. Unluckily for our Arabs, no breeze aided us in reaching Es-Souan. They were compelled to have recourse to their old method of tracking, to which I observed they returned more reluctantly after the prevalence of a day or two's fair wind, than when constantly engaged in it from morning till night. Darkness overtook us a few miles below the town, where, pretending to fear the rocks in the channel of the river, they were desirous of mooring for the night; but by promising them a present, and a long rest on the limits of Egypt, I urged them forward, and about ten o'clock arrived at Syene.

Here then we were at the "far Syene," so renowned for its granite quarries, and the well into which the sun was said to shine without a shadow, though the town is in fact north of the tropic. It stands immediately below the Cataract, and opposite the Isle of Elephantiné.

The quarries are at the base of the mountains behind the town, from which they are separated by a sandy tract, strewed with fragments of granite.—Here are seen the beds of the magnificent obelisks which were transported hence to the most distant parts of the Delta, and many of which grace the capitals of Europe. Emperors and Popes have thought the mere removal and re-erection of one of these masses of granite an achievement worthy of honourable record; but the old Pharaohs have the



Ruined Temple at Syene.

honour of having first hewn them from the mountains, and elaborately sculptured their surfaces of adamantine hardness. The chisel marks are still sharp: in one place is seen one obelisk half-severed from the rock, but broken and abandoned. We know but little of the state of art and artists under their great patrons the Pharaohs; but an incident recorded by Pliny strikingly illustrates the great interest they took in the progress of their architectural works. An obelisk having been hewn and brought to its destination, was about to be erected. So anxious was the monarch that it should meet with no accident in this difficult operation, that to oblige his engineers to exert all their prudence and skill, *he bound his own son to the apex.**

Early in the morning we passed over in a small boat to the Island of Elephantiné, enjoying, while rowing across the river, a view of the tombs and ruined convents on the neighbouring rocks, the modern village and the remains of the ancient city of Syene perched high upon the hills. Es-Souan has very justly been denominated the most romantic spot in Egypt. It is so; for, independently of the excited imagination of the traveller, now arrived at the borders of Ethiopia, the scene about the cataracts is strange and new. But the town itself may be put almost altogether out of the question, as it has not even the advantage of being situated, like other Egyptian towns, among palm-trees, being thrown, in a straggling irregular shape, on the slope of a barren hill. The view which it commands is everything—the Nile having here the appearance of a narrow lake, surrounded on all sides by arid but picturesque rocks, at the foot of which is seen a belt of bright verdure interspersed with scattered groves.

As the boat darted rapidly over the water, the prospect changed every moment, one rocky height after another seeming to glide away, or mingle with the distant mountains; while the eastern hills, intercepting the morning sun, threw their long shadows over the stream. We landed on the island near a small ruined staircase, leading apparently to the lowest level of the river, from which it may be entered by a doorway. This has been called a Nilometer; but I should rather suppose it to have been merely intended for a landing-place, like those numerous Ghats constructed by pious individuals on the banks of the Ganges. It is now, however, in ruins, and the staircase partly filled with loose stones and mud. Nothing could be plainer than the style in which it was built; and being contained in a wall, erected for the purpose of breaking the force of the river, and preventing it from wearing away the soil, it may formerly have led to the grounds and dwelling of some wealthy inhabitant of the island.

It has, however, been supposed that the rise of the river was measured by a scale on one of the side walls.† This opinion I can neither confirm nor contradict; because, though I searched in vain for such a scale, it may probably have escaped me, and be still to be found there.

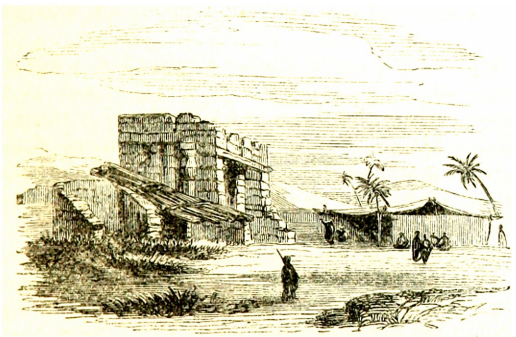
A little further to the south are many immense rocks of granite, rising considerably above the surface of the Nile, in one of which is observed a round opening, about four feet in diameter, formerly, perhaps, a deep well, whose rocky sides have now been broken or worn away nearly to a level with the water. Not many yards beyond are the remains of a lofty

* Wathen. † Ibid.

massive wall, raised upon the granite rocks here forming the banks of the stream, and exhibiting in two or three places perpendicular bands of hieroglyphics, which Belzoni supposed to have been a Nilometer; mistakenly, no doubt, as they are buried, during the inundation, far beneath the water. The ruined edifice, of which the above wall forms a part, may possibly contain the real Nilometer described by Strabo; but the whole of the interior is now so entirely filled up with rubbish, that, without laborious excavations, nothing respecting it can be ascertained.

Proceeding still farther towards the south, we come to a ruined wall, containing two windows looking out upon the river, which would appear to have been of Roman construction; but, in reality, there are no remains worthy of the slightest notice, not even the fragment of the granite propylon mentioned by former travellers; for, whatever it may once have been, it is nothing now.

From the edge of the river, we ascended over high mounds of ruins covered with fragments of tiles and pottery, towards the centre of the island, from whence we enjoyed a magnificent prospect. The Nile, closely hemmed in on both sides, appears, south of Elephantiné, to force its way with extreme difficulty through vast cliffs and terraces of granite; its whole channel, in this direction, as far as the eye can reach, being broken by a thousand islands; some consisting of a cluster of rugged pinnacles of different heights, black and bare; others appearing like a pyramid of loose masses piled on each other by the Titans; while here and there, among this ruinous scene, other islands of softer aspect appear, adorned with beautiful verdure, reeds, and grasses and tamarisks, which, occupying every nook and fissure, run along feathering the slopes and lofty terraces of the rocks, and waving like so many hanging gardens over the stream below.



A Temple and Modern Houses at Elephantiné.

The gaps and hollows of the Libyan chain are filled with yellow sand, brought thither from the Desert by the winds, through whose agency it is disposed in smooth, beautiful slopes, reaching down like beds of drifted snow to the very base of the mountains, where commence the diminutive fields of alluvial soil, covered, small as they are, with luxuriant vegetation. On the east are the gray rocks and shingly slopes, among which the eye detects the scanty remains of the Roman and Saracen towns.

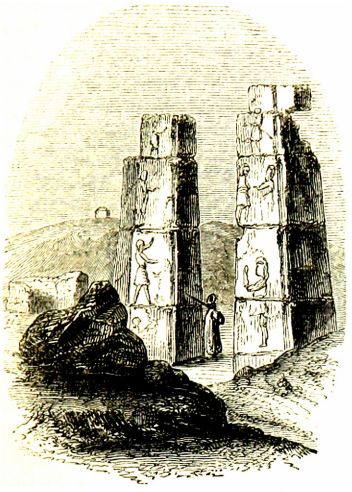
The southern extremity only of Elephantiné is rocky, lofty, and barren.

Towards the north, the surface of the island sinks gradually into a plain, covered with rich corn-fields, groups of cattle, date-groves, pastures, and villages. From the summit, where there is nothing but rubbish, we descended towards the granite colossal statue of Osiris, standing on the slope of the hill, among heaps of broken jars, &c. The god is represented in a sitting posture, with the arms crossed upon the breast, bearing a crosier in one hand and a sceptre in the other; the features are nearly obliterated; in other respects, the statue is in good preservation. Several of the natives now crowded about us with a few miserable antiquities, broken scarabæi, small idols of pottery, and coins half-eaten with rust, which they had picked up among the ruins. They were all ugly, squalid, and half-starved. Yet Sir Frederic Henniker and Dr. Richardson thought the women of Elephantiné beautiful. On my second visit, while in search of the neat baskets of different colours which are made there, I saw nearly all the inhabitants of the island, but I regret that I could discover nothing in the features of the natives to justify my joining in the compliment. The race, however, may have degenerated. Many of the early navigators saw beauty, we know, in the women of the South Sea Islands; but they had been a long time at sea, and our more fastidious contemporaries call their judgment in question. Abstracting all consideration of colour—for Memnon, whom Ulysses pronounced the handsomest man, Achilles, perhaps, excepted, on the plains of Troy, was black,—I have never seen, among either Arabs or Nubians, one woman who could be pronounced strictly beautiful. And if, as is exceedingly probable, the same thing held true of the ancient Egyptians before the Macedonian conquest, when the mixture of Greek blood may have improved the race, we can easily comprehend why their sculptures never represented beauty; though, in the countenance of Isis, there is often a placid matronly tenderness, inferior to, but not unlike, that of the Virgin, by Sasso Ferrato; and the resemblance is increased by her being generally represented with the Infant Huors on her lap.

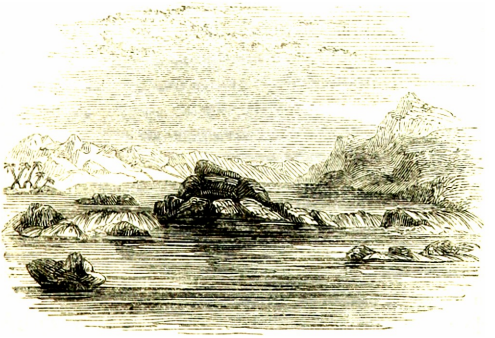
The complexion of the natives here, at the southern extremity of Egypt, after having passed through all the gradations of colour, is of a sooty, or chocolate hue. No country, perhaps, in the world furnishes so striking a proof as Egypt of the effect of climate upon colour. On the shores of the Mediterranean, the natives are nearly as white as Europeans. In advancing southwards, they constantly become more and more swarthy; until, by a series of imperceptible transitions, their tint deepens into black. This fact, for fact it unquestionably is, some have attempted to account for by observing that it is the proximity of the black countries of the interior, and not the effect of heat, that produces the change I have noticed. But to this it may be answered, that the intermingling of races takes place more generally in Lower than in Upper Egypt, since the means of purchasing slaves are more abundant near the seat of government. I only throw out this remark, however, by the way, the discussion of questions connected with the physical history of mankind not lying within the scope of the present work.

Returning to our boat, we rowed round the southern point of the island,

whose extremity is protected from the violence of the river by prodigious blocks of granite, which in many places bear the marks of tools. The main stream of the Nile is here so narrow as to excite our pity for its fallen grandeur, being not more than two stones-throw across; but, when we entered into the various currents which branch off, and rush with extreme impetuosity between the rocks, we quickly found that the old dragon had not lost the power. To go with the stream, however, was easy; but when we put about, and endeavoured to row up against the current, it was a different matter: and in turning the point of a small island, the boat struck upon a rock, and we had a narrow escape from being precipitated into the river. Fortunately, however, the boat righted; and we crossed over, amid foam and eddies, to the eastern shore. Landing here, we climbed the mountains of granite and sandstone to the south of the city, which command an extensive view of the cataracts, and the islands and rapids which constitute the principal beauty of the scene, together with the rugged chain of mountains forming the boundary of the desert towards the west. From the summit of an eminence, at a short distance to the east, we obtained a magnificent prospect of the commencement of the Nubian desert, rocky, dreary, desolate, and cursed with eternal barrenness. Yet the aspect of its arid surface was considerably diversified. Here you observed long ridges of gray sand, everlastingly whirled about by the winds and heated by the sun; farther on, granite rocks, of a dirty black colour, like masses of dried mud, resembling, in the midst of the sandy plain, so many islands in the ocean; and this alternation of dusky mounds with beds of light shifting sand, formed by the agency of the wind into valleys, circular hollows, vast



Remains of a Gate at Elephantineh.



The Cataracts.

wavy slopes, crested ridges, and ominous heaps like graves, continued as far as the eye could reach. In returning to the town we passed by a sheikh's tomb, most picturesquely situated on the sharp point of a mountain, round which the wind, now very powerful, roared and blew tremendously.

On returning to our boats we found the Reis of the Cataracts' deputy waiting for us, together with a camel-driver, called Mohammed, well known to travellers, who was very earnest in persuading us to proceed to Wady Halfa on dromedaries, this being, he said, by far the most expeditious way, since, instead of three weeks or more, which we must inevitably consume in the kandjias, we could, on dromedaries, perform the whole journey in ten days. Mohammed was a keen, shrewd fellow, who in his way had been a great traveller, having frequently made the perilous traject of the Nubian desert, east of the Nile, by the track pursued by Bruce on his return from Abyssinia, visited many of the black countries with slave caravans, and even penetrated as far as Suakin on the Red Sea, through the country of the Bisharein Arabs. He had, moreover, contrived, Heaven knows how, to pick up a little Italian in his journeyings, sufficient to make himself understood. Besides his business of camel-driving, he likewise exercised the professions of a merchant, of a guide, and of a dealer in curiosities and antiquities; and had spears, fellalat bows, poisoned arrows in quivers of crocodile or fish-skin, ostrich eggs, feathers, &c., for sale. His prices were not exorbitant, and I purchased of him several remarkable curiosities for less than one-twelfth what would be demanded for them in Cairo; among the articles which he exhibited to us was a spear with a rosewood-coloured handle, belonging to a native of Darfour, and said by its owner to have been taken in battle from a black king. It was curiously ornamented with brass wire, and had, no doubt, been the weapon of some wealthy chief, as the spears of the common Africans are very plain and rude. Nearly all the Nubians whom we saw here wore upon their arms, above the elbows, amulets, carefully sewn up in square red leather cases, and fastened to the arm by a broad thong of the same colour. Their nature was unknown to the wearers; and their virtue, it was said, would depart from them the moment they should be opened and inspected. Some would not part at any price with these preservatives against evil; and others, whom the *auri sacra fames* overcame, asked so extravagant a price for them, that we declined the purchase altogether.

An American traveller here witnessed a little scene, which deserves to be commemorated. I should observe, however, that he everywhere appears to be prejudiced against the Arabs, and seldom misses an opportunity to represent them in an unfavourable light. "We were accustomed," he says, "to leave everything in the charge of our Coptic dragoman, John; and so little reason have we had for distrust, that we have seldom turned a key —cloths, books, and even money, being left with no other security than such as they may find in his fidelity. Our Arab crew we have the best possible reason to believe false and dishonest. To-day John met with a tempter in the servant of a baker, with whom he had been negotiating supplies for our voyage. Grateful for his patronage, or under the influ-

ence of some baser sentiment, this man had contrived to make our faithful servant drunk. We found him barely able to stand, and quite bereft of all capacity to perform his usual duties. A drunken man is a rare spectacle in Egypt. Intoxicating drink is prohibited to Mussulmen; and whatever may be the fate of other precepts of the Koran, this, among the common people at least, seems to be pretty well observed. The climate, too, favours temperance, and our Christian dragoman is the only man I have seen intoxicated in this country. Of course this was an event of some moment, and the rumour soon brought a crowd from the town, less than half a mile distant, to witness the disgrace of the hated Nazarene. Some were evidently drawn to the spot by more selfish motives; and we found that John had been buying of their merchandise pretty freely, without discretion or economy. The venders of all sorts of trifles were crowded about the boat. Baskets, mats, Nubian shields, barbed spears, chickens, koorbashes, articles of Nubian dress, knives, ostrich eggs, antiques, &c., had been transferred from the bazārs to find vent in the expanded liberality of our unfortunate servant. The crowd, on our arrival, may have consisted of one or two hundred persons. Hard words and angry feelings had arisen. We found John hot with wrath at some insult, and he leaped from the boat to inflict chastisement on the real or supposed offender. The crowd shrunk back at our approach, and he pitched headlong into the sand. The sailors brought him on board, and with much difficulty we got him into the hold; but he soon sprung out again, incessantly declaring that he would be avenged. The Arabs fell to fighting among themselves. One woman wept, declaring that John had bought her trinkets without paying for them, and a dozen more volunteered to aid her in making good her claim. In the meantime several were engaged in stealing the bread, which, to increase our difficulties, was just then brought to us by the baker. I detected one woman with at least a peck of biscuits in her skirt, and another succeeded in carrying away a basketful before our eyes. Every one seemed intent upon increasing the confusion, and profiting by it. We several times drove them away from the boat by violence, but they immediately returned. The Captain of the port, one of the Pasha's officers, occasionally interfered, with his long Nubian spear, under pretence of restoring order, but in effect to increase the uproar.*

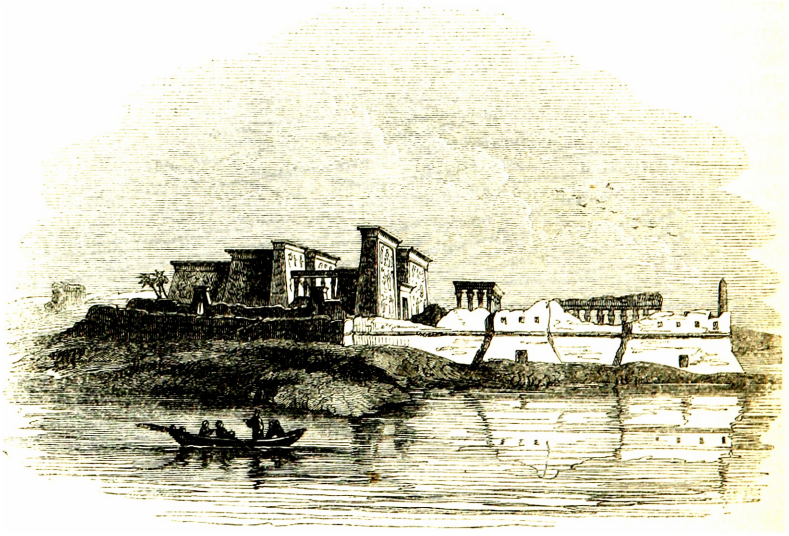
While at this place I saw one of a class—who appeared to be the legitimate successors of the old magicians of the Pharaohs—the serpent charmers. The man held the reptile fearlessly in his hand, now caressing it, now chafing it. The serpent writhed his body into wavy folds, protruded his narrow angular head, slid his slippery length through his master's fingers, and hung loosely to his hand, but never offered to retaliate.†

About two miles and a half from Ês-Souan commences that extensive Mohammedan cemetery, containing, according to Makrizi, the remains of twenty-one thousand persons, who, about the year 806 of the Hejira, perished of the plague. The ancient Saracenic town, whose extent can still be traced, was never, I imagine, sufficiently peopled to furnish the plague

* Dr. Olin. † Wathen.

with so many victims, even had it swept off the whole of the inhabitants; and a large proportion must have survived to erect so many grave stones. The popular tradition appropriates these monuments to sixty thousand prophets, or holy men, who flourished in former ages at Es-Souan. They are about two feet in height, by sixteen inches in breadth, and the inscriptions, in neatly engraved characters, are of considerable length. Many have been trampled down, or broken; but fortunately there exists among the natives a superstitious belief, that whoever violates the sanctity of these graves, will be stricken with immediate death; in proof of which they relate a story of a drunken Turk, who, to show his contempt for the saints, fired his pistol at one of the tombs, staggered forward a few paces, and dropped down dead. I saw the marks of the ball, which seemed to be quite recent; but for the fate of the Moslem I cannot vouch. Among the humbler monuments are many more sumptuous mausolea, consisting of a neat dome resting on four arches, or on a square basis.

Now for the cataracts.—Bidding adieu to Elephantiné, the breeze carried us gently along between the granite islets mentioned above, of the most singular forms, many of them sculptured with hieroglyphics—their polished edges glittering in the sun, a scene strangely beautiful, almost too wild for beauty. A hawk, nature's sculpture in the living rock, springing up propitiously on the left, from the brow of the eastern crags, seemed to invite us to the sacred isle of Philæ, and augur a prosperous passage of the intermediate cataracts. The wind freshened, and ere long, the lovely



Island of Philæ.

isle of Shehayl stole into sight, and flitted past like a dream, its palm-trees waving in the breeze, and children sporting under them, naked as the

day they were born; an Isle of the Blest it seemed—one of those happy islands where poets tell us the shades of heroes of old wander, under whispering groves, in sweet converse, placid and at rest, after the turmoils of life—aptly figured by the black rocks that, hemming in the noble river, gave so awful a character to the surrounding scenery. And yet, this little isle had still more exalted inhabitants: Sati and Anuki, the Juno and Vesta of Egyptian mythology, and Kneph, the spirit of the universe, delighted in its bowers and honoured it with their protection; and hieroglyphical tablets, anterior to the birth of Cecrops, attest its early sanctity. The whole valley, indeed, of the Nile, between Elephantiné and Philæ, was holy ground to the Egyptians and Ethiopians.*

Experience, however, soon dispels these pleasing visions from the mind of the traveller, for if, arresting the course of his boat, he happens to land on this seeming Isle of the Blest, he immediately finds its inhabitants rushing down to the beach, sword or bludgeon in hand, to prosecute their feud with the good folks of Es-Souan, some of whom the stranger has probably brought along with him. These people have carried on the feud for generations, and even though Egypt and Nubia are now under one governor, they are still, in this instance, the borderers of hostile kingdoms.†

The scenery now exchanged its character of mingled beauty and terror for that of unmingled grandeur; not that the rocks are particularly lofty, but Salvator never dreamed of such strange unnatural combinations—sometimes shooting into craggy pinnacles, often piled one on another, regularly and methodically, as if in mockery of human architecture, or wildly and confusedly heaped, like the fall of a volcanic shower—all gloom relieved only by the yellow sands that lie drifted, like snow-wreaths, on the face of the western shore; if that can be called relief which carries the imagination, beyond the narrow bounds of visible desolation, to the illimitable waste of the desert, where even fancy's wing must sink exhausted. The sun glowing in a cloudless sky reminded us of our approach to the tropics, while Father Nile, flowing swifter and swifter as we drew near each successive rapid, dashing and foaming over the islets, and often the most turbulent where we were to force our passage, seemed to bar all further progress towards his undiscoverable source. But his opposition, like that of the visionary waters of fairy legends, vanished before the steady breeze of resolution; he offered a more formidable barrier in ancient times, if we may believe the fictions of the poets.

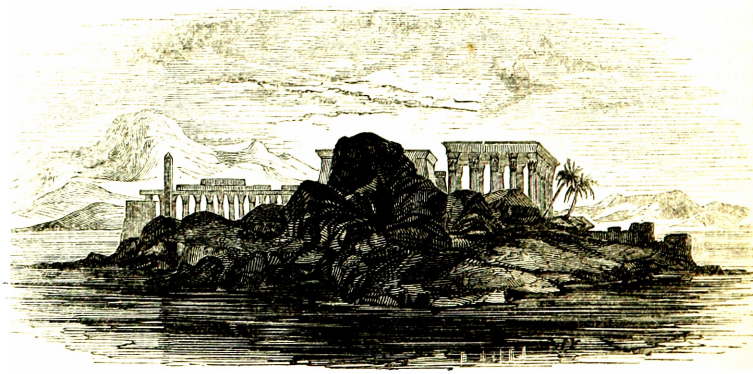
The Arabs who met us by appointment at the first rapid were of little use, the breeze carried us up steadily and beautifully, and we sailed on again for a while in smooth water; but the river recovered its velocity as we approached the second and more formidable rapid, winding our way between the little glittering islets, constantly expecting to fall foul of them, but escaping always by an inch or two—thanks to the counter eddies!—shifting our broad lateen sail every moment, as we changed our position with regard to the wind; the white-bearded reis, meanwhile, conspicuous from afar in his brilliant robes of red and blue, with variegated

* Lindsay. † Henniker.

turban and cane of office, gesticulating and shouting from the rocks; the sons of Shem, Ham, and Japhet, yelling the languages of Europe, Asia, and Africa around us; our last detachment of Arabs and Nubians watching us from the opposite shore, or a clinging to a log of wood, flinging themselves fearlessly into the very jaws of the cataract, swept down like lightning, soon to re-appear at our vessel's side, like mahogany and ebony statues, with a request for a backsheish, viz., a guerdon of their intrepidity; altogether it was a strange, a savage scene, worth coming all the way from England to witness.

Here, at the second rapid, the Nile appears completely closed in by the rocks; it was at first sight difficult to conceive the possibility of threading our way between, or penetrating beyond them. After one fruitless attempt, we succeeded in crossing to the opposite rocks, where, the natives attaching a large and strong rope of twisted palm fibres, we commenced our ascent, with the chorussed song of "Hayleesa!" "God help!" By dint of pulling and poling, in which we all lent a hand, we got up famously—to our wonder, looking back—for the rapid we had surmounted is by far the most difficult of ascent, owing to the narrowness of the channel, where alone it is practicable. Then we had smooth sailing for a while, the reis in his ample robes heading our *cortége* on the eastern shore, at least seventy or eighty men and boys, efficient and inefficient, following in his rear, laughing and skipping, pelting each other with sand, and flourishing their long dirks, half-earnest, half-play, till we arrived at the third and principal rapid, where the Nile, collecting all his waters, rushes down in one broad sheet, smooth as a mirror, and fleet as an arrow; but we mounted it with little difficulty, there being no rocks to defile through; pull, pull, pull, steady and unrelaxing, and the cataracts were passed.

We detached the rope, unfurled the sail (it had been useless since our



Island of Philæ.

arrival at the second rapid), and glided gently over the calm waters till, the rocks opening, the sacred island of Philæ and its noble temple stood

forth to greet us, like the castle of some ancient Dive among the rocks of Ginnestân.*

As in ascending the river I only glanced over the ruins of Philæ, I shall here describe my approach to it from the south, when I explored its ancient treasures under the most striking circumstances. Shortly after dark we arrived opposite a large island on the African side of the river, separated, however, from the main land only during the inundation. As the kandjia approached the shore, we heard the sound of the Nubian tambourine, accompanied at intervals by a shrill whistling noise, and loud bursts of merriment. Concluding, therefore, that all the rank and fashion of the neighbourhood must be assembled under some tree, or round a fire, we were desirous of witnessing, before our departure, the saltatorial performances of the Nubian beauties. But as our appearance would certainly put them all to flight, our herald, Bakhid, was sent forward with the olive branch to propose a truce, and, at his intercession, they consented to our beholding their revelry. We found the party congregated on a small open space between the rocks, at the foot of the mountains, partly shaded by tall trees; the moon supplying the place of lamps and tapers. The performers consisted of a youthful bride and her sister, whose relations and neighbours were met to celebrate with dances and songs the approaching marriage; the bride was about fourteen years old, her sister about twelve; and, contrary to what we had observed at Korti, both were clothed from head to foot. Nothing could be more different from the audacious movements of the Ghawazee, than their modest and not ungraceful manner of dancing; the slow step and easy turns of which somewhat resembled those of a quadrille. The rest of the company, ranged in a circle round the dancers, saluted and made room for us on our approach. They consisted of men and women; some of the latter of extraordinary stature, and half-naked, with children at the breast. Their only music was a tambourine, but the whole circle, clapping their hands and bending their knees, kept time with the instrument; while the women at intervals uttered a strange tremulous shriek, called by the Arabs zagharit, somewhat resembling the sharp notes of the fife, but so loud that it seemed to pierce the brain. In producing this extraordinary noise, the tongue is rolled in the mouth, while the voice is raised to a higher pitch than I had previously conceived possible; and when a number of persons join together in this infernal concert, the yell is most terrific. Our Arabs, never backward when mirth and laughter were on foot, immediately fell into the circle, shouting, clapping hands, and bending the knee with the rest; and the revellers, thus reinforced, proceeded with redoubled vigour. Song after song was sung, the musician thumped the tambourine, the dancers quickened their pace, while shouts, jesting, and laughter mingled with the clapping, the singing, and the drumming; so that a stranger, coming unawares upon the scene, would have taken us for a group of infernal spirits, performing their gambols in the wilderness. The moon, then near the full, shed a brilliant light, silvering the surface of the river, and casting a flood of splendour over the rocks and sands. But the beauties of the scene were

* Lindsay.

nothing, viewed apart from the swarthy assembly, who, whatever cares and troubles they might have known, had now cast them to the winds. Joy presided over the moment, nor did they seem, like the duller Egyptians of old, to require the sight of a mimic corpse, to enforce the wisdom of enjoying the present hour. This spectacle detained us longer than we had anticipated; but at length it became necessary to depart, though not without adding a few piastres to the fortune of the bride.

On returning to the boat we threw open our windows to enjoy the scenery. Never did the Nile appear so beautiful. Glittering like molten silver beneath the moon, it seemed to stretch away interminably towards the west, among numerous islands and steep pyramidal rocks, which, rising to a great height, threw their mingling shadows over its calm surface, concealing its extent, and creating the appearance of a vast lake. Nothing in all Switzerland, on which at the moment my thoughts were dwelling, could exceed in grandeur or beauty this magnificent reach of the Nile; which seemed to realise all that poetry has feigned of fairy land,—a paradise of rocks and waters, sprinkled with the splendid vegetation of the tropics, wrapped in unbroken silence, and lighted up by a moon and stars of inexpressible brightness. I lost sight with regret of its unrivalled beauties escaping one after another from the eye, as the boat glided rapidly down the stream through the same splendid scenery, all the way to Philæ, where we arrived late in the night.

Scene on the Nile.

Mooring close under Pharaoh's Bed, we immediately landed to enjoy the beauties of the island. Travelling is certainly attended by many pleasures, but among the calmest and purest it can furnish I would enumerate the prospect of Philæ by moonlight. The same objects that wear the appearance of monotony in description, maintain an untiring interest in the arrangement of Nature—so superior is the cunning of her hand! Here were the same rocks, the same river, the same moon and sky, which an hour before had so strongly affected our imagination: but what a novel aspect they now wore, and what numerous accessaries had crept in, to give a new character and additional splendour to the landscape! Art had here laboured, and not in vain, to render nature itself more picturesque. Propylæa, obelisks, long colonnades, innumerable figures of gods, reflected from the surrounding waters, and touched with soft light by the moon, divided our admiration with the giant crags and distant desert,

encompassing a large portion of the scene like a cloud; while the only sound heard was the sullen monotonous roar of the distant cataract. Standing on the summit of the great temple, whence the prospect is replete with grandeur, I suffered my imagination to wander back to past ages; when the roof now under my feet had echoed to the yells of pagan orgies, while the whole island and sacred stream were covered with priestly worshippers, engaged in sanguinary and mysterious rites, suggested by irregular passions, unmindful or ignorant of the true God and the pure worship which he requires. This was the most holy spot in the dominions of Egypt, where their mythological legends placed the tomb of Osiris; and when they desired to give peculiar emphasis and solemnity to an oath, they swore by him who slept in Philæ.

Directing our view over the elevated quay at the southern extremity of the islands, and following the windings of the Nile among the rugged promontories towards the distant regions of Ethiopia, the mind naturally recurs to the splendour of the past—the contrasted barbarism of the present—the rise, the reign, the fall of civilisation and art. The Ethiopian traveller, as he caught the first view of Philæ from the Nile, must have formed no mean estimate of Egyptian magnificence. Temples and porticoes, based upon grand substructions and combining with the green palms, the pyramidal propylon towering high above all; the whole mirrored in the river and backed by the mountain or shore—what a picture Philæ presented then! But Ethiopia, the parent probably of Egyptian art, is now the abode of rude tribes, and Philæ abandoned to silence and desolation.*

Point of Philæ.

Among the sculptures on the walls of this temple, by far too numerous to be here described, there is one group which deserves to be particularly noticed. In the chamber, where the birth of Horus is delineated, is a curious sketch of a bird encircled by the flowers of the Lotus, having on the one side a serpent, and on the other two priests in the act of worshipping a serpent suspended upon a cross, which has a great resemblance to the usual representation of the Brazen Serpent in the Wilderness.†

Let us descend into the vaults of the temple. Kindling a taper and casting a hurried glance over the sekos, we proceeded to explore those tomb-like recesses and subterranean passages, the intention and use of

* Wathen. † Col. Howard Vyse.

which defeat conjecture. The most remarkable of these cells we discovered in the thickness of the eastern wall. Its mouth resembles that of a mummy pit; but the depth being not too great, we descended one after another; and proceeding in a northerly direction, arrived in a short time at the termination of the passage, where our progress appeared to be stopped. On more narrowly examining the appearance of the place, however, I perceived in the ceiling a small aperture, through which a man might ascend by standing on another's shoulders. In this way I mounted, pulling after me the tall Arab, who had served as a ladder. At the southern extremity of this passage, a similar aperture conducted to the next story; and, ascending thus through a succession of passages, I at length reached the termination, where I found the whole apparently led to nothing. But this I cannot suppose to be the case. So secret and curious an arrangement must, doubtless, have had an object, and may probably lead to some concealed chamber or cell, in which the tomb of Osiris—at least what was so denominated by the Egyptian priests—may still exist. These narrow corridors, which receive light through small loopholes, contain several deep niches, but no hieroglyphics or sculpture of any kind.

The only inhabitant of the island at the time of our visit, was Selyma, an old woman, jocularly denominated by the Arabs, "the Queen of Philæ," who, upon the strength of this title, demands from travellers a small present; and as she possesses a cow, her right to furnish them with milk at her own price is seldom disputed.

In the afternoon we passed over to the neighbouring Island of Bigge, where there also exist a few small and insignificant remains of antiquity. A Nubian family, of which the Queen of Philæ appears to be a member, inhabits this island, where they lead a life of great seclusion and poverty. It was among them, however, that I saw the prettiest and cleanest Nubian woman I noticed during my travels. She was the wife of the master of the island, and had an infant in her arms; a large healthy child, with fine eyes, and a lighter complexion than usual. Poverty did not seem to interfere with their happiness, their looks and whole manner exhibiting an air of affection, not to be put on for show even by greater adepts in civilisation than they could be supposed to be; and their scanty domains were carefully cultivated.

The Island of Bigge is singularly composed of high mountains of granite, interspersed with fields of dhourra, and with the huts of a few inhabitants, built amongst foundations, mounds of rubbish, and ruined walls, in such a manner that no building of consequence can be examined without previously destroying them. I saw the remains of a Roman arch, and a block in one of the huts, inscribed with hieroglyphics, and no doubt many ancient memorials have in like manner been consigned to temporary or perpetual oblivion. It was a romantic, and, in many respects, interesting place, from the strong contrast of the fantastic masses of barren stone, with the luxuriant vegetation around them, and from the perfect seclusion and stillness of the scene, interrupted only by the indistinct noise of the water-wheels, which sounded, particularly as it happened to be Sunday, like the distant harmony of church-bells, whilst some yellow stones on the fertile

bank, reflected in the water, had the appearance of primroses—a resemblance not a little heightened by the warmth and serenity of the air; but at present neither the incense of praise nor the fragrance of spring exist in this plain.*

Selyma, who seemed to regard us as her subjects, no sooner saw our kandjia turn the northern point of Philæ, and make for Bigge, than she threw herself into the Nile, and swam across, to observe our movements. This is their ordinary mode of passing to and fro. When they have anything to carry, a palm branch is placed under the breast, as a kind of float, which, from their extraordinary mode of swimming, is easily kept in its position, and does not seem to hurt even the women.

In performing this traject the ancient Egyptians were not compelled to make use of boat or palm-branch. They had constructed a shaft under the channel of the Nile, which conducted them from the great temple to one of the sacred edifices on the smaller island. The entrance to this extraordinary work is said to have been discovered by Mr. Hay, of Linplum.† This fact really excites our admiration of the genius and enterprise of that strange people, who, two or three thousand years ago, originated the idea of sub-fluvial tunnels.

In their cottage there is a kind of altar, or cippus, which they use as a stand for their culinary utensils. Returning to Philæ, we found in the ruins a number of soldiers and young negresses, who appeared to feel a much deeper interest in what they saw, than the monks whom Belzoni met at Thebes. Departing at length, however, they left us in peaceable possession of the island for the remainder of the evening.

From Philæ we continued our voyage up the river. The fertile land on either side is exceedingly narrow; but every portion of it is brought into cultivation. The mountains, consisting of mere masses of naked granite, in many places approach the water's edge; while in other situations there are about three or four yards of cultivable soil, formed by the deposit of the river. Half a day's sail from Philæ conducted us to the finishing of the granite rocks, which now gave place to those of calcareous stone, though on the river side, in most instances, their exterior still retains a black colour and a polish. The vein of red granite, which begins below Es-Souan, and extends beyond Philæ, is supposed to continue in an easterly direction till it joins the shores of the Red Sea, keeping nearly throughout the same breadth; the observations which we made in the trips into the desert from Es-Souan, tended to confirm this opinion.‡

To enlarge the extent of their fields, the industrious inhabitants construct long walls, or jetties, of large stones, running out at right angles with the banks to a considerable distance into the stream, narrowing its course, and allowing the mud, that quickly accumulates behind them, to harden into solid land, which is immediately brought into cultivation. I have observed a similar practice, on a smaller scale, upon the banks of the Rhone, in the Upper Valais, where, in fact, much land might thus be gained, had the Valaisans half the industry and energy of the Nubians. The skill, neatness, and enterprise of these people, who, having for ages

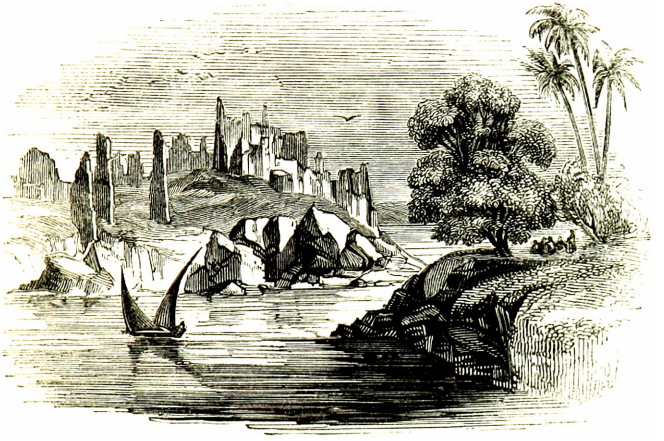
* Colonel Howard Vyse. † *Idem.* ‡ Irby and Mangles.

enjoyed more freedom, are superior in vigour and hardihood to the Fellahs, excited our admiration. The ground in this part of the valley was everywhere laid out and cultivated with superior art and industry, though exactly on the same plan, as in Egypt; and I also observed that the little canals, conducting the water from the Sakias to the fields, were often raised upon small embankments of earth, about three feet in height, very neatly formed, and carefully kept in repair. The principal crops are wheat, barley, lupines, and a sort of kidney-bean, now covered with beautiful pale purple flowers. In general, however, the corn seemed more backward than in Egypt, though we passed one field of barley already in the ear. In the sands about Parembolé, were numbers of young palm-trees recently planted, protected from the wind, the cattle, &c., by a circular wall of loose stones or mud, raised to the height of two or three feet about the trees. The palm in fact seems here, as in Egypt, to constitute the principal riches of the peasant; immense quantities of dates are annually exported down the Nile; and in passing the frontier at Birbé, we observed prodigious heaps exposed to the sun, and surrounded by an enclosure of mat-work, to be shipped or transported on camels to Es-Souan.

Date-Palm Fruit.

The evenings on the Nile are the most splendid I have witnessed; from these I, of course, exclude the storms which, in these regions, seem to take the place of our northern snow-drifts. It is extremely hot during the day, and the scorching rays of the sun are reflected with much intensity from the surface of the water, the limestone rocks, and the sand of the desert. The sun sinks behind the Libyan mountains, which lie enamelled in the darkest blue, while the rays of light play, as on a prism, upon the opposite chain of the Arabian mountains, tinging them with the brightest hues of gems, and flowers, and butterflies; the large detached masses resembling flaming roses, while the long drawn chains look like bandeaux of amethyst in golden settings; and the calm waters give back the reflected radiance, shrouded in a veil of transparent mist. The air is redolent with all the perfumes of spring; the fields of rape seed, beans, lupines, vetch, and cotton, are in full bloom, the wheat and the barley bow before the breeze; acacia and other trees, with parasite plants, bearing rich blue and lilac blossoms, grow around the water-wheels, called Sakias, which are continually at work to irrigate the fields; or you find them flourishing naturally along the uncultivated parts of the bank.

This sweet balsamic fragrance reminds me of the delicious scents which our own woods and fields send forth in the finest of our seasons, the month of June. The wild pigeons rock themselves on the long palm branches, or coo in playful mood, like sportive children, among the bushes: shoals of water-fowl, some white as alabaster, others dark as ravens, are congregated in large flocks, chirping their monotonous evening hymn, which they seem to have caught from the uniform ripple of the water which they



Essouan.

inhabit. Sometimes a large heron flies across the whole breadth of the river, or a pelican, with its heavy wing, dives in pursuit of a fish. When the sun has set and the twilight has faded away, the south is often re-illumined by a dark and less brilliant twilight, which once more tinges the fading mountains with its rosy hue. Meantime, the first stars begin to appear; Venus, as an evening star, more glorious than any other planet in the firmament. The bold hunter, Orion, ascends slowly over the mountains of Arabia; and still later, in the far south-east, the constellation of Canopus, which, I believe, is never visible in Europe.

We seem to sail between two firmaments. The silver band of the Nile is changed into a deep blue heaven, spangled with soft and trembling stars, while those above look calm and grand, like benign spirits, very different to the cold and shivering brilliancy of our clear frosty nights. They need not frieze here, for our nights in July can hardly be warmer than those in the month of January in Upper Egypt and Nubia. The banks continue animated to a late hour. The fires burn brightly on the village hearths, which occupy the place in front of the door: the bleating flocks of sheep and goats are driven homeward amid a mingled din of human voices, the barking of dogs, the incessant creaking of the Sakias. The men who work the Shadūf sing to a regular measure, while throwing their buckets into the Nile and emptying them into the channels, which

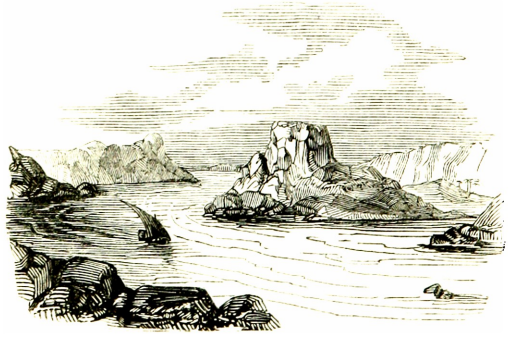
convey the waters in further districts: the song of the Arab as he returns homewards from the fields, the loud hailings and the conversation of the men from their boats, re-echo on all sides. The Arabs talk incessantly; they speak to each other from boat to boat, from the shore to vessels on the river, and, I verily believe, from village to village; at all events, as far as the voice can reach, and that, too, always in a tone which sounds like noisy threatening. From a solitary bark you may hear the dull notes of the Darabukah, which reminds me of the Spanish guitar, although these instruments have not the slightest resemblance. At length all the sounds die away. The night grows chilly, and we are glad to return to the cabin and take our tea.

When the wind blows keenly from the north-west—a quarter to which it often adheres, with scarcely one day's exception, for whole months together in Egypt, and which is as favourable to our ascent of the Nile as it retards our downward voyage—then, indeed, our evening enjoyments are sadly blighted, and we have to submit to the uncomfortable feeling of being half frozen, though muffled up in all our wrappers.*

CHAPTER XXXIV.

(From the Gates of Kalabshi to the Second Cataract).

A little to the south of Taphis, we approached what are called the "Gates of Kalabshi." The mountains on both sides, fluctuating in their course, bend inward, and impend in vast cliffs over the Nile, which is here greatly narrowed, and, during the inundation, roughened with slight rapids. Finding, on our return from the ruins, that there was no wind, while the rocks prevented all attempts at tracking, we strolled forth into the fields, which, however small, are exceedingly well cultivated. Separating from my companions, who remained near the village, I wandered away among the rocks, and began climbing one of the loftiest and most pointed summits of the Libyan mountains. The ascent was exceedingly difficult, and not without



Cataract of Kalabshi.

* Countess Hahn-Hahn.

danger, being obstructed at every ten paces by enormous blocks of granite and *rosso antico*, resting upon a bed of loose stones, which a touch would have put in motion, and sent thundering down into the river below. Among these tottering masses, therefore, I made my way with the greatest caution, as in many places they impended over my head; and, on looking down, could perceive far below fragments of similar rocks, which, accidentally put in motion, possibly by the wind, had been dashed to splinters in their fall. Here and there small pieces of calcareous spar and rose-coloured granite sparkled in the sun, that poured down his fiery rays into the rocky hollows, whence they were reflected with renewed violence. Being encumbered with the heavy cloak, worn on all occasions in these countries, it was some time before I succeeded in reaching the summit, which, it is probable, no European ever before ascended; but, when there, enjoyed, what I had long desired, a boundless prospect over the western desert, which, though sombre and monotonous, was singularly grand. The mountains, lofty near the river, gradually, as they recede from it, decrease in height, until far in the distance they seem to dwindle into mere undulations, scarcely roughening the surface of the waste. These innumerable pinnacles, black, rugged, bare, and partly involved in shadow, impart to the landscape an air of gloomy sublimity, the constant concomitant of great desolation and barrenness, which awaken an idea of death. But, perhaps, it is to the immensity of the wilderness, of which they form the outskirts, that they in a great measure owe the effect they produce on the imagination.

Everywhere I could observe traces of the fury of the tropical rains, which deluge all these mountains in summer, and hurl down the wild ravine rocks of prodigious magnitude. Towards the east, the prospect is nearly the same, except that the dusky rocks rise, like so many isles, amid boundless expanses of fine yellow sand, drifted by the action of the wind into small beautiful waves, like those upon the sea-shore. Through this scene of utter sterility, the eye pursues with pleasure the course of the Nile from the point where, far to the south, it emerges as if springing out of the earth from between two rocky ridges, to the equally distant point on the way to Egypt, where it is again hidden from the view by similar hills, while its noble stream is edged throughout with two narrow borders of bright green, over which the hamlets and palm-groves of the Noubahs are thinly scattered. From one of these lofty pinnacles, towering far above everything around, I sought to obtain a glimpse of the temples of Kalabshi; but either they were masked by some other object, or their colour, resembling that of the sands, prevented my distinguishing them. In the narrow channel of the river beneath, were two or three small islets, partly covered with vegetation.

Being quite alone, my thoughts had perhaps wandered homeward, and time was slipping by unperceived. I was at length roused by the sound of my companion's voice among the rocks below, calling aloud to me to descend, as the wind had freshened, and we might possibly reach Kalabshi in the course of the day. The breeze, however, was slight, scarcely sufficient to carry us through the "Gates," where the black perpendicular

cliffs, viewed from the river, seemed doubly grand, more especially when, by the illusion arising from the shifting of the point of view, as the kandjia advanced before the wind, they were put into apparent motion, and seemed to be following each other in solemn procession down the stream. Beyond this strait the valley widens, and cultivation again commences. In a short time we once more found ourselves becalmed on a smooth sandy promontory on the eastern bank, where the Arabs, playful and thoughtless as children, immediately poured forth upon the beach, and began to amuse themselves with their usual sports. We also landed, and, in default of better employment, reclined upon the sand, watching the ripple of the waves, and the motions of the birds upon their surface.

" At my feet a river flows,
And its broad face richly glows
With the glory of the sun,
Whose proud race is nearly run.
Ne'er before did sea or stream
Kindle thus beneath his beam.
Ne'er did miser's eye behold
Such a glittering mass of gold!
'Gainst the gorgeous radiance float,
Darkly, many a sloop and boat,
While in each the figures seem
Like the shadows of a dream;
Swift, yet passively, they glide
As sliders on a frozen tide."*

The mind, on such occasions as this, seems to derive pleasure out of nothing. There was no new or remarkable feature in the scene. It was not the first time we had lain down upon the sand, or gazed idly at the river, or enjoyed the delightful warmth of the sun; yet that small level promontory, the pipes we smoked, and the coffee we drank there, with the lovely serenity of the blue stream, the glittering plumage of the birds, and the splendour of the sky, took a much deeper hold upon my memory than objects far more striking.

The calm was not of long continuance, a light breeze soon springing up, by the aid of which we were enabled in a few hours to reach Kalabshi.

In the evening we passed two crocodiles; they were on a shoal in the middle of the Nile, and retired before we got near them; they were the first we had seen since we had left Philæ: indeed they are never met with near that island.†

As we approach it, the eastern mountains present, for a considerable distance, the appearance of a vast Cyclopean wall, consisting of huge loose masses, piled irregularly upon each other. On arriving at Kalabshi, we immediately landed, and walked between copses of mimosa, and over fields of lupines, to the great temple formerly approached from the river by a flight of steps, now destroyed or buried in mud, though the parapets remain. Having ascended these, we proceeded over a paved area to a second flight of steps, leading to the summit of a broad causeway, one hundred and forty feet in length, extending to the foot of the magnificent

* D. L. Richardson. † Irby and Mangles.

terrace on which the ruins stand. On either side of the causeway runs a low wall, along the centre of which a broad band of brass, or some other metal, formerly extended; the groove into which it was received still existing uninjured. A third flight of steps ascends to the broad terrace, which stretches along the whole front of the propylon.

This propylon, one hundred and twelve feet in length, sixty in height, and twenty in thickness, having never been completed, has the appearance of a naked wall; and from the poverty and meanness of the effect it produces, we may discover the taste and judgment of the Egyptians in covering the exterior of their edifice with bas-reliefs. The doorway, both within and without, is ornamented with frieze, moulding and cornice, on which the usual figures are sculptured. Passing under this lofty gateway, we enter the dromos, now so completely encumbered with fragments of broken columns, cornices, entablatures, and vast blocks of loose stones, that it is extremely difficult to traverse. It was formerly surrounded by a peristyle, of which one column only is now standing. The pronaos is adorned with twelve columns, and the intercolumniations, as usual, are closed in front by a mural skreen, reaching half-way up the shaft. The foliage of the capitals consists, in some cases, of a series or cluster of the fan-like leaves of the doum-tree, elegantly arranged; in others, of vine-leaves, surrounded by tendrils and bunches of grapes.

On entering the pronaos, we observed the façade of the ancient fane, surrounded with a fine bold moulding, inclosed in a frame-work of modern masonry, and forming the cella of the present edifice. The space inclosed within this moulding is covered with sculptured figures; among which the most remarkable is the representation of a human sacrifice, where the victim, whose whole clothing consists of a scanty waist-cloth, is on his knees, with his hands tied behind his back. Behind him stands a priest with lofty mitre, who, with one hand, holds him by his long hair, while in the other he brandishes a small axe, ready to strike off his head. This horrid scene takes place in the presence of Osiris Hierax, who is seated on his throne, enjoining and enjoying the spectacle.

Among the painted sculptures adorning the interior, we discovered a group unlike anything elsewhere observed; apparently representing a company of female Psylli, exhibiting the power of charms and music over the serpent race. The first maiden bears upon her head a small flat basket, about six inches in diameter, from the centre of which arise three full-blown lotuses, the middle one upright, the others bending outward. Below these on either side is the same flower in the bud, with the stem broken, and the lotus drooping over the edge of the basket. Her next companion, standing a little in advance, carries in her hand three small cones, resembling cypress-trees, with a flower depending from the centre one, and from the stems of the others a cord with tiny bells; while the third, the principal enchantress, is engaged in shaking a serpent out of a phial upon a kind of altar piled with fruit; and beside it, on the ground, is a diminutive vase, out of which another serpent appears to be issuing at the "voice of the charmer." Soon after our arrival a party of Nubian women and girls collected together on the sunny terrace, in front of the

propylon, some of them wishing to sell us the little apron of thongs, constituting their only covering; others their brazen armlets and neck-laces of beads. Both women and girls behaved with that modest simplicity which, in all countries, is the attribute of unsophisticated woman. Their dress and ornaments were in the most primitive style of savage costume: broad armlets of buffalo's horn or brass, or metallic beads, connected together with intertwisted thongs. A scanty apron of thongs, about nine inches long in front, and shorter at the left side, suspended on a narrow belt passing round the loins, and ornamented with beautiful white shells intermingled with red and blue beads: this was the only garment of young unmarried girls.

Modern Nubian Girl

I saw in one of the neighbouring villages a little child, apparently the daughter of a Sheikh, and evidently proud of her appearance, carrying milk in an inlaid basin, and adorned with a profusion of bracelets, earrings, neck-laces, &c., and with her hair dressed with coloured stones, but without any clothing, excepting a leathern girdle round her waist, ornamented with silver in various devices.*

The remainder of the body among the females of Kalabshi, which is of a dark copper colour, with a tinge of red, seemed to be well oiled, and looked smooth and soft. Their hair, often adorned with fetiches, and ornaments composed of shells and beads, was twisted into innumerable small straight tresses, matted together with mutton suet or castor oil, which, melting in the sun, dripped down upon their shoulders and bosom, exhaling so fœtid an odour, that it was with difficulty we could stand near them. Prior, describing in his usual lively way another African race, observes, with no less truth than wit, that—

> "Before you see, you smell your toast,
> And sweetest she, who stinks the most."

Many of them wore large necklaces of brown wood or ebony beads, or cowrie shells, intermingled with others of red or blue glass. From their ears, and various parts of their hair, heavy metallic ornaments were suspended; and one woman wore the nose-ring so much affected by the females of Hindustan.

My fellow-traveller wishing to take a specimen of Nubian costume to Europe, endeavoured at Tafa to purchase one of their thong-aprons. A modest little girl, understanding his wish, slipped behind a wall; but as, for some reason or other, it was not purchased, she quickly reappeared with it among her companions. A woman, who happened to be present,

* Col. Howard Vyse.

sold her daughter's apron, and giving her a small cloth to replace it, commanded her to withdraw and undress; but the poor girl, loth to part with the only article of finery she possessed in the world, retired sorrowfully, and sitting down at a little distance on a stone, sobbed aloud; not reflecting that with the piastres her mother had received for it, a dozen new ones might perhaps be bought. This apron had been so saturated with fat and oil, that it was found impossible to suffer it to remain in the cabin, and it was consequently suspended on the mast, to be purified, like the unclean Ghosts in Virgil, by the wind. In general, the armlets worn by the Nubian women would seem to be put on while they were very young, so that, when grown up, it is sometimes impossible to take them off, though their arms and hands are delicately small. Indeed it was necessary to cut through with a pen-knife the one I here purchased, consisting of thong and metal. The brass armlets are open at the side, and resemble, when off the arm, the thin crescent of the new moon. The married women wear a sort of loose garment, which, like that of the Hindús, leave one shoulder bare, and descends below the knee. Sometimes, in very hot weather, a corner of this garment is thrown over the head, as a defence against the sun, though the face is always left uncovered. Nearly all were desirous of selling some portion of their dress or ornaments, requiring what was considered a good price. The boys, who, being stark naked, had no personal ornaments to dispose of, brought us some small antiquities, such as broken idols, coins of copper and bronze, or fragments of sculpture.

The country round has a pleasing aspect, owing to the groups of palm-trees, and their contrast with the barren rocks everywhere else; but the cultivated grounds are very scanty. Behind the mountains are valleys with some acacia trees, of which the natives make charcoal: when the Nile is at its height, they make rafts of the same wood; and the charcoal being put into sacks, fabricated of palm-leaves, or of a kind of rush, is conveyed in them to Cairo for sale; dhourra, salt, and tobacco, being brought back in return.*

The Nubians are tributary to the Pasha, and formerly paid for each sakia two slaves; they procured them by sending parties into Dongola and the adjacent countries, who, concealing themselves near the river, seized the people when they came for water: at present, however, two hundred and twenty-five piastres (about forty-five shillings) are paid by half-yearly instalments for each machine. In addition to this tax, duties of one piastre for every palm-tree, of ten per cent. upon dates, and of sixty-five piastres on every slave exported from Es-Souan to Cairo, are also demanded. The Nubians seem proud of their country. They are a handsome people, excepting that the lower part of their faces often project like those of negroes; they have, like the Arabs, very fine teeth and eyes: their hair, generally woolly, is cut short, excepting one tuft on the top of the head, according to the Mohammedan custom. Their clothing is composed of white cotton, and consists of a shirt, short trousers, and a long folded scarf passing over the left shoulder, and confined round the waist by a narrow girdle, with long ends. They wear a white cotton cap, and a

* Beiz ani.

knife or dagger fastened in a case to the inner part of the left arm above the elbow. They have generally ear-rings, carry spears and large daggers, long straight swords, and invariably nabouts four or five feet long.*

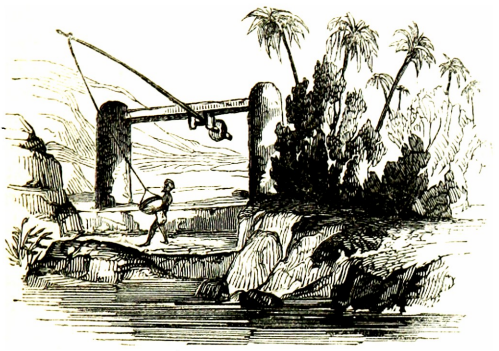
In all these villages there is no bread to be obtained. Milk and butter, however, are generally found; but these, together with eggs, when they can be procured, are considerably dearer than in Egypt. The extraordinary inquisitiveness and curiosity remarked by Burckhardt among the Nubians, seem to have been the effect of the peculiar circumstances of those times, when the appearance of a Memlook, or Turkish army, was daily apprehended, rather than as forming any part of their national character; for I could discover in them no traces of those qualities. They appear, at present, to entertain few hopes of a political change, though the slightest reverses occurring to Mohammed Ali, would again, I make no doubt, awaken their ancient love of anarchical independence. If we assert with Burckhardt, that the villages of the Nubians are built of stone, a wrong idea of them will certainly be conveyed, yet I scarcely know what other terms to employ. The huts of which they consist, are, in many cases, merely so many circular walls of small loose stones, piled rudely upon each other, and covered above with dhourra stalks; they are so frail that the slightest force would be sufficient to destroy them. Twelve or thirteen of these huts, often fewer, huddled together among heaps of ancient ruins, or on the shingly slope of the mountains, constitute a village or hamlet, which might be easily passed without notice, particularly in the dawn or twilight, being exactly of the same hue as the surrounding rocks.

We here saw a camel swimming across the river; one man swam before with a halter in his mouth, leading the animal, another followed behind.†

The narrow belt of cultivation continues on both sides; but the scantiness of fertile land, which could never in this part of the valley have been much more extensive than at present, tends to prove that the numerous temples found in Nubia could at no period have been needed by the inhabitants. They were therefore constructed on the conquest of the country by the Egyptians, whose priests, like the Brahmins in the Dekkan, sought to conciliate or subdue the minds of the people by the voluptuous allurements or terrors of their religion. Another idea is suggested by an examination of the Nubian portion of the valley of the Nile. Egypt, we know, was subdued and governed during many years by a Nubian chief. The whole population of this kingdom, from Es-Souan to Matrass—an extent of five hundred miles—has, with apparent fairness, been estimated at a hundred thousand souls: suppose that in antiquity they amounted to double or treble this number; and then reflect upon the military power of a kingdom which could be conquered and held in subjection by such a handful of men, and finally owe its deliverance to the artifices of the priesthood. Much of the prejudice which still possesses us respecting the political and military greatness of the ancient Egyptians, might perhaps be removed by an attentive examination of their history; an inquiry foreign, however, to the nature of the present work, which merely professes to

* Colonel Howard Vyse. † Irby and Mangles.

recount what I saw, with the reflections thereby suggested. Returning from the consideration of antiquity, which perhaps occupies too much the attention of travellers, we every day saw fresh proofs of the industrious character of the present inhabitants. The perseverance they exhibit in watering their fields, when prevented by poverty from erecting a sakia, is exemplary. The height of the bank above the level of the Nile—in some places not less than thirty-five feet—rendering it impossible to raise water in the ordinary way, by the lever and basket, they construct in the sloping bank five small reservoirs, placed one above another, in which the water is successively raised by an equal number of rude hydraulic machines. Each of these levers is worked by a man; and the water, when it has reached the summit, is distributed over the land by small canals of the neatest construction. On a field west of the river we observed a greater number than usual of trees, among which the Egyptian sycamore, the doum and date-palms, were the most numerous. The moles thrown out in the river for the purpose of gaining soil, are injurious to navigation; for, being often on both sides, they too greatly narrow the channel, creating dangerous currents and eddies. On the west bank we saw, in the afternoon, a fine white eagle perched upon a rock. The hamlets here are very numerous, standing, as in Egypt, in small palm-groves, while single date-trees are scattered over the fields. A sheikh's tomb, of a shining white appearance, crested the summit of a neighbouring eminence. The channel of the river is diversified by islands; shortly after passing which, we arrived at Dandoor.



Modern Shadoof.

The temple, to visit which the traveller pauses at this place, stands on the western bank, near the foot of a rocky hill, at a short distance from the river, and is surrounded by extensive heaps of hewn stone, showing that other buildings formerly existed there. In front of the propylon are the remains of a large court wall, round which—from its appearance at the top, where the stones were formerly connected by clamps of metal—I conjecture a peristyle, or colonnade, originally extended, affording to the priests an agreeable shady walk. There being no opening towards the river, it must have been entered by side-doors. The propylon is lofty and narrow, but was certainly not connected laterally with the great court wall. It has the ordinary ornaments; indeed there is nothing remarkable in the façade of the temple. The architrave of the pronaos is supported by two columns, with lotus capitals and small plinths, rudely adorned with

sculpture; and the intercolumniations are built up half way. Two small side-doors lead into the pronaos, one on the north, close to the columns; another on the south, close to the cella.

From these ruins we continued our walk along the shore, where we saw the peasants watering their wheat-fields with the sakia; a much less laborious contrivance than the one mentioned above. The whole breadth of the cultivated country does not, in this part, exceed seventy or eighty yards, beyond which the rocks and sands commence. Here we observed numerous specimens of the Asheyr, or "silk-tree," bearing a large fruit like a love-apple, with a rind very thin and easily broken; the interior of which, in its unripe state, is filled with a juice white and thick as buffalo's milk, but, when ripe, with a fine soft substance, white and shining, like flos silk. These beautiful filaments, when perfectly dry, the Nubians use as tinder, and the Bedouins twist into matches. In the hands of an ingenious people they might, perhaps, be woven into fabrics more lustrous and delicate than the spoils of the silk-worm; and, for the purpose of making the experiment, I collected a small quantity to be carried with me to Europe. Nothing can be more beautiful than the fruit of this tree: in size exceeding an orange, and of a soft green colour, tinged on the sunny side with a ruddy blush, and covered with a hoary down and a bloom resembling that of a peach, it hangs among the pale foliage, tempting the eye from afar. Yet frequently, while all its external loveliness remains, it is found, when broken, to contain nothing but dust and ashes. May not this, therefore, since the tree abounds in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, be the celebrated "apple of Sodom?"

We observed, also, on various parts of the narrow plain, scattered tufts of the senna plant, with its light green leaf, and small delicate yellow flowers. The *cucumis colocynthis*, which produces the *coloquintida*, or bitter apple, likewise grew plentifully along the paths. It is a handsome prickly creeper, of the gourd kind, not unlike the cucumber-plant, and, having nothing to climb upon, spreads itself over the fields. Its fruit is about the size of an orange, but round and green; and, when ripe, full of brown seeds. The Arabs have discovered its medicinal virtues; but their mode of using it is singular: taking the fruit, while unripe, and scooping out the pulp and seeds, they fill the rind with milk, which is allowed to remain in it all night. In the morning they swallow this potion, which they say operates as a powerful aperient.

During our walk we observed, while proceeding through a thicket near the river, that the air was impregnated with a faint but exquisite perfume, the cause of which we in vain sought to discover. There was a small myrtle-leafed tree, growing in the midst of several other unknown shrubs, from which we at first supposed it to proceed; but the leaves, on being pressed, yielded no perceptible scent. Perhaps the date-palm here already begins to feel the influence of spring, and diffuses its genial perfume through the atmosphere.

In the neighbourhood of this thicket we were joined by one of the Pasha's soldiers, an Arab from Egypt, who, being here in a kind of exile, seemed to regard us with some degree of pleasure, as awakening associa-

tions of home. His brother, while engaged in impressing men for the army a little higher up the river, had seized on a peasant, who immediately afterwards succeeded in effecting his escape. Not content, however, with this, he for several hours followed the soldier at a distance, and, coming up with him soon after night-fall, wounded him deeply in several places, particularly in the breast; where, according to our informant's description, one of the gashes was as long as the palm of the hand. The Nubian peasantry, it should be remarked, all wear a short crooked dagger, suspended in a red leather sheath on the left arm above the elbow, where it is concealed by their garment. In sudden brawls, to revenge a recent insult, or long-remembered injury, these are the weapons employed; but in public feuds, when village rises against village, and tribe against tribe, they make use of a broad straight sword, or spear, with round or oblong bucklers, manufactured from the crocodile's skin or the hide of the hippopotamus. The Arab followed us to our boat, begging a plaister for his brother's wound; but, while I was preparing it, entered a neighbouring field, to plunder a poor woman of her half-ripe lupines. At our desire he immediately desisted; but such are, perhaps, the causes of much of the ill blood which exists in Nubia between the soldiers and the natives. The fields in this part of the valley are covered with barley in full ear, in many places fast turning yellow; so that the first harvest, I imagine, will commence in a few weeks.

The natives of Gyrshé, a village a little farther southwards, are rather rough in their manners, but were easily satisfied with a piece of soap, a pipe of tobacco, and a few paras. Here we bought some karkadan, a grain of the size of a small shot, which the Nubians use as coffee. It is a good substitute where no coffee is to be had, and is much cheaper. A little above this place is a dangerous passage of the Nile, a chain of rocks running across the river, and making it very alarming when the waters are low; but as they were now high, we passed without danger.*

Landing near Gherf Hussein, on the western bank, we for some time proceeded close along the edge of the water, where the whole breadth of the cultivated land could not have exceeded three or four yards. The bank consists of a series of narrow terraces, rising behind each other; and all these were now covered with lupines in flower, or with a sort of French bean, which, creeping over a hedge of stunted mimosas, forming the line of separation between the sands and the valley, enlivened the whole shore with its beautiful purple blossom.

On the opposite side of the river is Sabagoora, a large ruined village, where a battle had been fought between a Nubian chief and Ishmael Pasha. Gherf Hussein, formerly Thosh, greatly resembles Ethaush, which signifies Ethiopia. Kush, the old Egyptian name for this country, is retained in the Nubian appellation of Gherf Hussein, which is now called Kish. The remains of two ancient watch-towers are to be seen towards the north, and the ruins of the temple are finely situated above the modern village. I sometimes fancied that in this country the evenings were accompanied by a longer twilight than in Italy.†

* Belzoni. † Colonel Howard Vyse.

Travelling slowly along, admiring the richness of this narrow slip of vegetation, we were struck by a curious appearance, perfectly new to us both: the sun shining in tropical brightness, our shadows fell beside us, strongly defined upon the ground; but far aloft upon the mimosa hedge, not less than thirty feet above the river, were two other shadows, faint but distinct, moving as we moved, though they seemed to proceed from some invisible bodies over our heads. For a moment the cause did not present itself; but on turning round and regarding the Nile, we discovered that the image of the sun, brightly reflected from its glassy surface, and shining upon our bodies like a second sun, produced the double shadows which had at first puzzled us.

Through a break in the mimosa hedge we climbed up the bank, and emerged into the desert, where the view which presented itself exhibited peculiar beauty. The elements of the picturesque may elsewhere be more strikingly combined, producing more softness, more variety, more grandeur; yet I have seldom beheld a more poetical or delightful landscape. Perhaps, if rigidly investigated, the reason of this might be discovered in causes independent of the combination of the physical objects around. It was the nearest approach I had hitherto beheld to a land wholly uninhabited, to which we involuntarily attach ideas of perfect freedom, tranquillity, and unsophisticated enjoyment. Nothing, we imagine, is there found to interrupt the current of our will, Nature herself, upon whose mysterious bosom we sport and flutter like moths, appearing to be subjected to our dominion; and the calm and sunshine generally prevailing in those latitudes delude us into the persuasion that in such scenes our passions would also be still, and permit us serenely to taste the unmingled sweets which complete retirement and solitude appear to offer.

Whatever may be thought of this fanciful hypothesis, the scene that occasioned the recollection of it was worthy of admiration. But in its simplicity consisted, perhaps, its principal charm, everything being presented to the eye in vast unbroken masses. On one hand the interminable surface of the desert, covered with golden sands, swelling in soft undulations at the foot, or on the steep slope of lofty pink or rose-coloured rocks, or expanding into vast level plains, smooth as untrodden snow; on the other, the placid blue river, meandering between dark rocks and glittering sands, and bordered with narrow green fields, copses, or tufted groves, marking the site of distant hamlets, and extended over all a tropic sky, glowing in fiery brightness. But the charm of the landscape is not translateable into words. How, indeed, can we represent, with the pale colours of language, the rich harmony, the majesty, the art, the splendour, and, if we may dare so to say, the *taste*, with which Nature has thrown together its various elements, and taught them, as it were, to express at once, by the vast desert and fertilising river, the power and bounty of the Creator? In fact, I felt that there was a religious beauty in the scene, a loveliness which, elevating the mind, directed it towards the Fountain of all beauty and all perfection; and this effect, imperceptibly, perhaps, to ourselves, may be the source of the enthusiastic delight inspired by the contemplation of external nature.

In the heavy sands, through which we toiled with difficulty, we observed the foot-marks and dung of several animals, such as camels and gazelles; and, proceeding some distance along the river, at length turned aside towards the right, and ascended the rocky ridge, in this part of the valley running parallel with the course of the stream. Travellers in Nubia rarely quit their boats, except for the purpose of visiting the several ruins, or, if they perform any portion of the journey by land, never deviate from the camel-tract, generally found close to the Nile; which accounts for no mention having yet been made of the numerous conical black mountains we now discovered in the western desert, presenting from a distance the appearance of so many volcanoes, which had burned long, and been gradually extinguished. Many were low and inconsiderable, but the peaks of the principal ones seemed to fall very little short of those of Vesuvius in their elevation above the level of the sea.

The broad plain lying between us and the mountains, though roughened by many inequalities, appeared at a distance level as the sea. It is supposed to have been formerly cultivated; and, in fact, a rich vegetable mould is found at the depth of about three feet beneath the sand.*

About half a mile from the river the heavy sands terminated, the remainder being hard, firm, stony, and capable of supporting the weight of artillery. From time to time we traversed, in our progress, large patches of ground thickly strewed with varigated pebbles, beautiful agates, and pale cornelians, such as were found by Bell of Antermony on the plains of Mongolia: and observed the sand marked in various directions by the tracts of the gazelle, accompanied, in some instances, by those of some much larger animal, that seemed to have been in pursuit of it. On drawing nearer the mountains, we perceived, moving slowly, a single antelope, which, on seeing us, immediately took to flight, and disappeared. Our estimation of the distance of the mountains proved to be erroneous. We had been, in fact, deceived by the even surface of the waste, for having proceeded mile after mile, we seemed to be no nearer our journey's end, while the sun poured down its burning rays, tempered, however, by a pleasant breeze from the west, constantly blowing, and maintaining an agreeable freshness in the air.

The plain, as we advanced, was covered for miles round with fragments of lava, red, black, and grey, and increasing in magnitude and abundance as the distance between us and the mountains diminished. The features of the cones presented so strikingly volcanic an aspect, that, those of Vesuvius itself, viewed from the Bay of Naples, seemed less so. A few hundred yards to the right of our track, in a small hollow near the foot of the hills, we saw a mirage more perfect than the one I had witnessed near Canopus, yet evidently falling far short of the description of other travellers.

Reaching the mountains in about three hours, we found the whole surface of the plain around, the ravines, valleys, and narrow gorges dividing the innumerable cones from each other, encumbered with showers of cinders and lava, which seemed to have been poured forth from various craters,

* Belzoni.

and to have run in many directions over the sand, in small black bubbling rivulets, cooling and hardening as they ran. The loftiest of the nearer cones, towering six or seven hundred feet above the table land of Nubia, appearing from below to present evident traces of a crater, we resolved to ascend it, though the day was already far spent; and, in making towards it, passed over one of the smaller hills, resembling in form an oblong barrow, and divided from the neighbouring mountain by a deep torrent bed, now dry; while the vast cone by which it might be said to be overshadowed, distinguished by features gloomy and dismal beyond conception, covered on all sides with black rocks, scoriæ, and ashes, torn up by rain torrents, scorched and pulverised by the sun, appeared like an infernal mount on the banks of the Cocylus. The ascent to its summit was difficult and laborious. To say nothing of the heat, which was such as is seldom experienced in Europe, our movements were impeded by the nature of the ground, the scoriæ and cinders slipping every moment from beneath our feet, and causing us frequently to climb twice or three times over the same space. Many parts which seemed practicable at a distance, were now found to be nearly perpendicular. Our long walk over the sand had wearied us, and we often paused to compare what we had achieved with what was yet to be accomplished. But, persevering in our undertaking, we at length reached the summit.

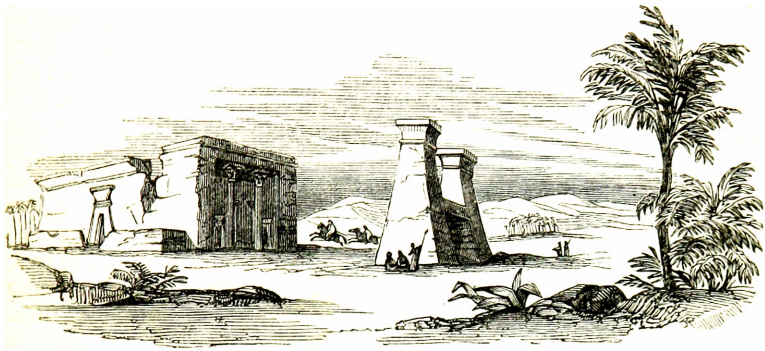
The prospect commanded from this lofty pinnacle is, I am convinced, unlike anything elsewhere met with in the world, the whole surface of the Desert to the west and south, being covered farther than the eye could reach with enormous black cones, in some places springing up in isolated masses, and elsewhere united by a curtain of rocks into immeasurable ridges, rising in endless succession beyond each other. Ten thousand volcanic peaks here, perhaps, come under the eye at once; yet these appear to be but the beginning of a series of similar mountains, extending to an unknown distance towards the heart of Africa. The crater found upon the summit of the mountain we had ascended, was now shallow, as if it had been filled up by time; and we observed several bones, probably of camels, among the cinders. When war prevails among the desert tribes, scouts, perhaps, may be stationed on these heights to watch the movements of the enemy; for we saw on one of the peaks a small rude breastwork of stone, probably intended to cover them. On returning towards Dakke, where the great propylon served as a pharas to direct our course, we passed, near the village, a narrow beautifully green oasis, about three-quarters of a mile in length, and running nearly parallel with the banks of the river. It is indebted for its fine verdure to a fountain, situated near its northern extremity, whence sufficient water is raised for the irrigation of the whole. Night had already commenced when we reached the Nile.

Near this place we observed, immediately opposite Dakke, two lads crossing the river, which is here tolerably wide, and pushing and towing a laden reed raft.*

The Temple of Dakke is unquestionably the most remarkable piece of

* Irby and Mangles.

architectural patchwork I have anywhere seen, exhibiting three distinct styles of construction. The nucleus of the whole was originally a small square chapel, of elegant proportions, with a diminutive propylon in front. An apartment was then added to the southern end, and a wall built round the whole, about three feet and a half outside of the chapel. Between the new



Temple of Dakke, Nubia.

and old walls, we found, towards the east, a narrow chamber, containing a deep sepulchre, at the southern end of which are seen the figures of three lions, cleverly executed, two seated facing each other, with the yoni-lingam, and two large feathers between them; the third, in another compartment above, walking towards the east, while a Cynocephalus appears to be worshipping before him with uplifted hands. Over one of the chapel doors, four of these animals, with very long tails, are approaching in procession a winged scarabæus, the symbol of the sun. On the eastern wall is Isis, seated on a throne, with Harpocrates standing behind her, enjoining silence in the usual significant manner. In the modern chamber are two figures presenting a sphinx and a wreath of flowers to one of the principal divinities.

In design and execution there is but little difference between the bas-reliefs on the ancient chapel, and those in the southern apartment, or the small sepulchral chamber, which are comparatively modern additions; but all are extremely superior to the sculptures usually found on the walls of Egyptian temples, and seem, in the richness of the contour, to betray the handiwork of a Grecian chisel, though the attitudes and positions are stiff and ungainly by hereditary right.

About noon we passed, on the eastern bank, the house of the chief of the Ababdé, settled in this part of Nubia—a small square neat building, with two windows towards the river, and an entrance from the south. Behind it was an extensive garden, surrounded with a good brick wall, and thickly planted with trees; the beautiful foliage of which appeared above the inclosure. Near this house, towards the south, were several tower-like buildings, containing wheels for raising water, conveyed from

thence by neat aqueducts to the upper part of the valley. The tamarisk is here plentiful, covering the western bank with verdure; and the land, on all sides, admirably cultivated, bearing strong evidence of the active industry of the Ababdé, who, forsaking the wandering life led by their forefathers, have settled and become cultivators.

In search of the ruins of Korti, we landed by mistake two or three miles to the north of them. The village, though long and straggling, is, perhaps, one of the largest in Nubia. According to custom, the natives were making merry. In a court-yard, squatting on their hams, smoking and gossiping, we found a number of men, three of whom undertook to be our guides. Numerous parties of young women were assembled in front of their huts, dancing naked round large fires, by the light of the moon, encircled by their neighbours, men, women, and children, seated on their heels, clapping their hands, singing and laughing at their performances. On our near approach, however, the greater number took to flight, but, after the first alarm was over, many returned, relinquishing their amusements to follow us; so that, by the time we reached the ruin, the party resembled a small caravan. The chapel, chiefly remarkable as having, during so many centuries, escaped being overwhelmed, is extremely small and insignificant, consisting of only two chambers, entirely destitute of ornament, with the exception of the winged globe over the doorway. The Nubians were exceedingly amused at seeing us examine the interior and the ornaments of the frieze by candle-light; and formed, no doubt, a very extraordinary opinion of our pursuits. On returning, they accompanied us a considerable distance. Having ceased to be apprehensive of these people, none of us carried any arms; though, in Middle Egypt, particularly about the Bird Mountains, to venture unarmed a hundred yards from the boat, even by day, would be unsafe.

Near the village of Bardeh, the mountains on both sides approach the river, but those on the eastern bank are by far the more elevated. Though apparently of volcanic formation, they do not, like those to the west of Dakke, rise in isolated cones, but in chains or ridges, thrown irregularly between each other, and divided by deep gorges of the most dismal appearance. In many places, the naked rocks project in ragged strata from among the superincumbent masses of lava or cinders, and the tops of the mountains are pointed or conical. The narrow belt of cultivated land, running along the foot of these hills, was now covered with bright green corn, the wheat, exceedingly strong and clean, about two feet high, forming an agreeable contrast with the black rocks behind. In this part of the valley there are numerous silk trees. Many of the fields, now in stubble, had been cultivated with dhourra.

Our crew here killed a snake that was basking on the river side; it was grey with two black marks below its head. It was curious to see the precaution they used before they would surprise this reptile, which they represented as poisonous, though I did not believe it was so. We had this morning a regular wild-goose chase after an old one and four young ones; the crew jumped over-board, and caught them all, though with some difficulty. I mention this merely to give some idea how expert these

people are in the water; they may almost be said to be amphibious. Passing through this part of the valley in the month of June, we saw the calibash growing wild on creepers up the accacia trees on the river side: our crew got three very good ones: the boys also found a sort of wild currant growing close to the water side; we tasted some, and thought them not unlike the blue-berry; though not shaped like them, being round; in size and colour they are alike.*

The village of Bardeh stands on the eastern bank, near the river, in a small grove of date trees. On the opposite shore the cultivated land is very narrow, the sands coming down almost to the water's edge. Here, on the summit of a rocky hill, are the ruins of an ancient town, which appears to have been considerable, many of the houses having been built of stone; and these, together with such as are constructed with sun-dried bricks, might easily be rendered habitable; but the Nubians appear to prefer their dhourra thatched huts.

As we were pursuing our voyage, a man hailed us and asked, "if we would buy a spy-glass;" he said he was a native of Sennaar: we thought it must be the property of some European who had been robbed, and therefore said we would see it first; in consequence he came into the boat, to be carried to the village, where it was (about four hours sail above); however, on arriving there, he walked off, and we never heard again either of him or his glass; the fact is, he wanted a passage, and you, I am sure, will give him credit for so cunning a method of getting one. It is by these little traits that one can judge of the character of people of this description.†

On one of the loftiest peaks of the eastern mountains, we observed a number of large stones placed upright; the antique idols, perhaps, of the aborigines, who, like the Persians, may have delighted to worship on high places. Thick rows of tamarisk and mimosa trees form the boundary between the desert and the cultivated land. Upon the eastern bank, near one of the wildest valleys I ever beheld, filled with a chaos of black rocks, rendered still more dismal by the shadows of the overhanging cliffs, we saw a Nubian hamlet, the smallest, the rudest, and most primitive that can be conceived, consisting of a cluster of eight or nine circular huts, covered with dhourra stalks, in comparison with which, pig-styes are well built and comfortable.

"A low-roof'd cottage, first of all,
Rose up before my eyes:
Not such as dreaming poets shew,
Nor such as oft arise
Out of the quick Promethean touch
Of Painting's artifice.

No bowering ivy round it clung,
Flecking the bricks with green;
No flowers against the windows spread
A many-coloured skreen;
Nor was one plant or herb within
The little garden seen.

* Irby and Mangles.

† Irby and Mangles.

No swallows trill'd from out the eaves
Their plain, primeval lay;
No wreathed smoke came dancing up
In giddy, elf-like play;
No cock, fresh-proyned, stalk'd beneath
The garish solar ray.

No elm-tree hung its drowsy dome
High up above the thatch;
No faithful dog about the door
Kept its unwinking watch,
Or lay asleep where sunbeams made
A little rippling patch." *

God assuredly tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; as, but for the mildness of the climate, men would certainly perish in such wretched dwellings.

About four o'clock in the afternoon we arrived in the Wady Medyk, where, in some places, the sandstone mountains approach each other so closely, that they barely leave space for the passage of the stream; the eastern range being still by far the loftier, though the opposite mountains project their rugged bases farthest into the river. Half an hour to the south, the rocks on the west assume a new aspect, rising perpendicularly from the plain, leaving a narrow belt for cultivation, now covered with wheat, backed by a long beautiful grove of date trees. The appearance of these rocks is very remarkable, being disposed, not in horizontal strata, but in perpendicular columns or masses, like basalt. In sailing up the Wady Medyk, we were overtaken by sunset, which painted the salient masses and airy pinnacles of the eastern chain with the most brilliant colours, more especially one vast cone that, from its dark purple hue, seemed to be covered with heather in blossom. On the shore we could hear the songs of the Nubian peasants, returning from the fields with a light heart, to the lowly huts above described. An old raven was croaking alone upon the rocks—our vessel glided rapidly along through the rippling waves—the Arabs lay listlessly upon the deck—the cooks were busily preparing dinner. Presently the sunshine rested only on the peaks of the mountains; and then twilight succeeded. Continuing our voyage by starlight, we moored at a late hour below the temple of Seboua.

We landed on the Arabian side of the river; walking, during these beautiful evenings, being exceedingly agreeable. The barley, in this part of the valley, already yellow, and nearly fit for the sickle, has a thick and long beard, and the grains are ranged in two rows of three deep. Consequently, the ear, which, with us, presents the same breadth on all sides, is here flattish. Wheat and barley are evidently of secondary consideration in Nubia, being merely allowed to occupy the narrow terraces on the sloping banks of the river, while the more extensive plain above is appropriated to the cultivation of dhourra. It was the same among the ancient Egyptians, who despised wheaten bread, and habitually lived upon that which was made of spelt. Mimosas and silk trees grow in great abundance upon the margin of the river.

* Edmund Ollier, a young poet of the highest promise, who has already given to the public things of remarkable merit and originality.

The neighbourhood is very thinly inhabited, having few hamlets, and no scattered houses. On the African side there are more marks of cultivation, and inhabitants, who, like the North American savages, collect together after dark, and, kindling a large fire, dance half naked about the flames. This evening, in proceeding along the foot of the cliffs, we observed, high up in the mountains, a large bright fire, no doubt lighted for this purpose. At a distance from the hamlets few persons are ever encountered after dark. During our long walk we met but one solitary Nubian,—driving an ass, and hastening with all speed towards his home,—who saluted us respectfully, in Kensy or Noubah. Shortly afterwards we passed a ruined house, now roofless, but more spacious and solid than the common dwellings of the peasants, and having attached to it a low covered gateway, containing a large jar filled with water, for the use of the traveller. Many small huts are here constructed for the purpose of watching the gazelles, which descending at night in great numbers from the mountains, to feed on the young corn, and drink at the river, the Nubians, with the characteristic patience of savages, lie concealed in these huts, and shoot them as they pass. Hyænas are said to be numerous among the rocky valleys in the neighbourhood. We are again entering the land of crocodiles, and the *siksak* has reappeared with his patrons.

Curiosity seems never, in some natures, to be abated by experience. The novelty which each successive day presented, frequently caused the approach of morning to appear tardy, and led us forth before we could clearly distinguish objects. Our first business to-day was the examination of the temple of Seboua, celebrated for its long avenue of androsphinxes, which has communicated to the whole district the appellation of the "Lion's Wady." The ruin stands about five hundred yards from the river, in the midst of a large plain, probably once fertile, but now overwhelmed with sand; and the propylon, constructed in a plain style, looks imposing at a distance. Traversing a short interval, we arrive at a flight of steps, adorned on either side with a statue, ten feet four inches high, leading to the summit of a broad and lofty causeway of hewn stone, one hundred and eighty feet in length, over which we advance, between two rows of sphinxes, to the principal gateway. The original height of this causeway cannot now be ascertained, from the accumulation of soil about its foundation; but it would appear to have been adorned on all sides with sculpture, for the façade, where alone a small portion of the basement is visible, exhibits the figures of men, women, and cynocephali, executed in a rude style.

The approach to this temple, through long avenues of androsphinxes, with mitred heads, before time, barbarism, and drifting sands had defaced or concealed its ornaments, must doubtless have been magnificent.

From the temple of Seboua, we proceeded along the mountains of rock running parallel with the course of the river, where we observed numerous deep stony valleys, partly filled up by the sands, which are driven in torrents from the desert by the impetuous west wind, and unless resisted by the efforts of government, which alone, in these countries, possesses the power of erecting great public works, will shortly swallow up all the arable land of Nubia. A proof that cultivation formerly extended

much further westward than at present was discovered on this plain; at a considerable distance from the river a peasant was observed sinking a large pit, where, at the depth of about two feet and a half, he found a rich mould, which he carefully removed to his garden. There can be no doubt that a considerable number of these small flats might yet be reclaimed, by raising the water of the Nile to their level by means of powerful machinery. In fact, I this morning observed several extensive fields of light sand, divided into square compartments, which, having been well irrigated, were partly covered with fine young wheat, partly with the stubble of the last year's dhourra.

In a small hamlet, about two miles south of Seboua, was a large house of very showy appearance; the front being covered with white stucco, ornamented with several fanciful devices, painted in bright red colours. The other houses in the hamlet consisted partly of stone, partly of mats fixed against upright poles, the roofs formed with dhourra stalks: the whole having an air of neatness and cleanliness, seldom seen in these countries. After walking about a league through heavy sands, beneath a tropical sun, we overtook our boats.

One of our Berbers this morning sung a song to cheer up the crew; this is their constant custom when working; the words are as follow:—

"Oh Nubia, my country, thou smellest like a rose; when I sleep I dream of thee, and thou appearest a garden full of flowers." You may easily imagine that our ideas of Nubia, "where a flowering shrub is scarcely ever seen," were not in unison with those of our neighbour. We, however, found this a new proof of that happy disposition which nature implants in the breast of every man, to be partial to his native soil, be it what it may.

> "The naked negro panting at the line,
> Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine:
> Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
> And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
> Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam,
> His first, best country, ever is, at home." *

This was the first day of the Ramadan, and my worthy dragoman, in a fit of piety, had, in the morning, resolved rigidly to observe the prescribed fast, and accordingly came without his breakfast; but as we were returning through the heat, he approached me, and with a very rueful countenance remarked that it was impossible for persons in the service of Europeans to fulfil the injunctions of the Mohammedan religion, since, instead of sitting still, or sleeping, as the Turks do nearly all day during the Ramadan, it was necessary to be in constant motion; and that, for this reason, as soon as we reached the boat, he should, with all due respect to the prophet, take the liberty to eat his breakfast, with a most solemn determination to make no more attempts at fasting.

Shortly after, we passed, on the eastern bank, a large plantation of date trees, surrounded by a wall, the first we had observed since our departure from Cairo. The fertile land, on this side the river, is in some places about two hundred and fifty yards in width; but, on the opposite shore,

* Irby and Mangles.

the slope of the bank only is cultivated. For several days the wind has been extremely uncertain, sometimes blowing in strong gusts, then suddenly dying away; during these calms the heat is excessive. Even the nights have lost that freshness observable in Egypt. At El-Malkeh the mountains, which, a little to the north, had approached the river, recede towards the east, leaving a small plain for cultivation, now covered with green corn, and many scattered date trees. West of the river are cotton plantations, intermingled with date groves. Near this village we saw a crocodile basking on a sandy island in the midst of the stream.

Between El-Malkeh and Korosko we enjoyed one of those prospects which are supposed to belong to Fairy Land. Nowhere in Sicily or Italy, not even on the Lago Maggiore, or in the narrow valleys of the Apennines, have I beheld anything so soft, so bright, so poetically beautiful. The Nile, here of a considerable breadth, makes a sudden bend, and, to those sailing up the stream, appears to lose itself among the distant mountains. The light breeze that impelled us along left the surface of the water unruffled. A series of small isles, some high and rocky, others consisting of a smooth expanse of yellow sand, others green and fertile, rose in succession in the centre of the stream. One of these, called Shemt-el-Melook, resembles a little Paradise, being fringed all round with tufted green rushes, behind which the smooth untrodden sand rises in a series of narrow steps to the summit, where small irregular masses of dark rock appear at intervals between copses and shady bowers of acacia, mimosa, and tamarisk trees. On one side, mountains more than a thousand feet in height present their vast frowning cliffs; and, on the other, lofty trees, springing from an impenetrable jungle, overhang the stream; before us, towards the south, numerous hills, of different form and elevation, rose confusedly behind each other, while a thin silvery haze, impregnated with light, floated through every hollow, break, and chasm, rendering the outline of each craggy peak, hanging cliff, and truncated pyramid, strikingly distinct. Between the rocks on the one hand, and the high woody bank on the other, the sight appeared to be carried along, as between two immense dusky walls, to a point where the country, expanding and assuming softer features, was glowing in sunshine and beauty; while the light, streaming in our faces from behind the mountains, through the lofty rows of date trees which extend along the shore, and the sun's image, too brilliant to be looked upon, was reflected from the smooth marble surface of the river.

Here we shot a wild goose: its plumage was beautiful, and its taste exceedingly good, though we had not the means of cooking it in a very savoury manner.*

At the approach of twilight we landed on the western bank, where the desert is divided from the river only by a narrow strip of jungle. The sand is covered with patches of a fine sort of sedge, on which we found three cows browsing, and, a little farther, observed a party of Nubians approaching from the south. On mooring, soon after dark, we saw, directly opposite, a large fire among the rocks, and could distinguish numerous voices, proceeding, according to our Nubian pilot, from a slave vessel from

* Irby and Mangles.

the Black Countries. In these calm evenings the whole face of the Nile is bespangled with stars, which I never observed more brilliant. But this sight the Arabs consider as unpropitious to the traveller, indicating the total absence of wind, and menacing him with unwelcome delay. To defend the individuals employed about the sakias from the heat of the sun, they erect over the wheel a slight shed.

Late in the afternoon we arrived at Korosko, which being the place where the Berber and Sennaar caravans make a halt on entering the cultivated country, we landed to make inquiries among the inhabitants for ostrich plumes, native arms, and other articles from the interior of Africa, frequently to be met with at this village. Close to the river, a Turkish governor, returning from Sennaar to Cairo, was encamped on the plain, with a great number of attendants and followers, all preparing to bivouac *sub dio*, with their baggage, horses, and camels. Their carpets, saddles, water-sacks, culinary utensils, pipes, and African curiosities, lay scattered upon the ground. At a short distance was a small space surrounded with a white linen inclosure about five feet high, in passing which we observed a number of young black female faces, adorned with crisp curls, peeping over the canvas, their thick lips distended with a smile, and their laughing eyes wantonly rolling; and as soon as we had turned the corner, the whole bevy burst out into peals of laughter. They were no doubt rejoicing at the prospect of entering into the harems of white men. From all I have seen or heard of these negresses, I believe that, were the case fairly put before them, ninety-nine out of every hundred in all Africa would prefer the easy life they lead in the harems of the north, to the estate of toil and poverty in which they grovel in their own country—I mean before they become mothers; for when women have borne children, there are comparatively few who would not, for their sakes, submit to the greatest toil and privations. But this view of the matter has nothing to do with the question of slavery, which remains the same, in whatever light it may be considered by wantonness and ignorance.

The village of Korosko consists of a few scattered low huts, constructed with small loose stones, or clay, roofed with dhourra stalks and palm branches. Several Ababdé and Bisharein Arabs, entirely bareheaded, with their black elf-locks hanging loosely over their shoulders, were strolling over the plain. They are generally fine tall men, who, though their features are haggard and savage, have long necks, and gracefully-formed shoulders; while the Fellahs and Nubians are distinguished by high shoulders and short bull-necks. One fine Ababdé youth I observed walking with the air of an English gentleman from the camp towards the village, who, notwithstanding his swarthy complexion, was handsome, his features being very regular, and his large black eyes lighted up with much intelligence. Here we saw a specimen of the Nubian or African shield, quite round, with two small notches opposite each other in the edge, and a high boss in the centre. The wooden frame-work, strong but light, is covered with the skin of some wild beast, dressed like parchment; but the owner could not be tempted to sell it. The villagers possessed a few ostrich feathers, but of an inferior description, grey and short, consequently of little or no value.

Farther up the valley we afterwards, during the hot months, saw the Dongola caravan pass; it was preceded by about fifty camels, carrying the provisions, &c. The conductors were armed with a sword, dagger, and spear each; they wore sandals to preserve the soles of their feet from the burning sand, which we now feel most sensibly, being obliged to stop every now and then to pour it out of our shoes. These sandals are much like those worn by the ancient Egyptians, and which are often found on the feet of the mummies at this day.*

A little to the south of Korosko we landed on the eastern bank, which must here have exceeded thirty feet in height. The plain above was thickly planted with palm-trees, among which we walked for some time, amused by the cooing of the doves, and the songs of several other birds, the notes of one of which greatly resembled those of the thrush. According to a regulation of the Pasha, when any boat in the public service ascends the river, the reis is authorised to call on such Nubians as may be working at the sakias between Korosko and Derr, to assist in tracking; because the course of the stream in this part being from west to east, a fair wind is scarcely to be expected, as it generally blows either from the north or south. Taking advantage of the Pasha's ordonnance, the crews of travellers also seize upon the peasantry, and compel them to aid in tracking; and our pilot, pretending to be in the service of government, began to avail himself of this privilege; but when the men had been taken from one or two wheels, the alarm being spread, all the sakias were abandoned. The inhabitants of the villages likewise escaped into the mountains, so that when I passed through they appeared to be deserted, except that once or twice a sheep was heard to bleat, or a dog to bark among the heaps of rubbish. In all these villages the houses, roofed with palm branches, are built of mud in the form of square towers, large at the base, and gradually decreasing towards the summit, exactly like an Egyptian propylon, each dwelling possessing a spacious court, surrounded by high walls, in which, so long as there is shade, the women are accustomed to perform their household work. By the side, or in front of the greater number, is a platform of clay, about eighteen inches high and eight or ten feet square, surrounded by a neat parapet. On these platforms they spread mats and sleep during the summer. Here we observed several sheds, consisting of two walls and a roof, containing, for the use of travellers, jars filled with water, which are closed with a round mat, and have a small brown cup placed beside them. The water, exposed to a free current of air, is kept cool as in the Nile. Near the same villages I remarked several square shallow pits sunk in the ground, coated with white plaster, in which they deposit their newly-threshed corn until perfectly dry; and while in the granaries the grain is covered with straw. What is wanted for immediate use they preserve in large jars, which—such is the honesty of these barbarians—they commonly place on the outside of their doors. Dates, also, are thus kept.†

* Irby and Mangles.

† All savage nations appear to possess granaries of this description. The Kaffers, in southern Africa, hollow out in the earth wells about six or seven feet in depth, nicely plastered over,

Here, on the edge of the stony desert, we were overtaken by three derwishes, travelling towards the south, each bearing on his shoulder a thick pole, with a large round knob at the bottom, and about twelve feet in length, bound from end to end with a small coarse cord, so as entirely to conceal the wood. To the top was attached a number of long strips of cotton of different colours, which, as they walked, fluttered in the wind; and on the other extremity was suspended a basket containing their provisions. They were decently dressed for men of their caste; and he who appeared to be the chief, wore on his shoulders a quilted shawl, the colours of which had once been brilliant. We walked slowly to allow of their overtaking us. Saluting us with the "Salām aleykum," they requested something for the love of God, and I gave them a few piastres, for which they appeared exceedingly thankful. Proceeding on with us, they related their history—one describing himself as a native of Siout, another of Fouah, and the third of some other small town in Egypt; and they had all now travelled from the cell of a great Moslem saint, at Tanta in the Delta, to visit another holy man of much celebrity, four days' journey beyond the second cataract. They were young men, under forty, and two of them had pleasing countenances. The third, who wore his black hair, like an Ababdé Arab, possessed a set of wild and rather savage-looking features, and went bare-headed in the sun, reminding me strongly of the faces of old Christian ascetics of the early ages of the Church. I purchased of the principal derwish his chaplet of wooden beads, with which he seemed somewhat unwilling to part, though, as he said, he did so to oblige a stranger. Their heavy poles not permitting them to keep pace with us, we quitted them and continued our ramble.

The plain, whose surface is at least forty feet above the river, is here of considerable breadth, and was now covered with luxuriant crops of wheat, lentils, kidney-beans, peas, and onions, among which many fine cotton plantations were interspersed. A sakia occurs at almost every hundred yards. Having walked about six miles, we reached the ruins of an ancient town, situated on the brow of a hill, where portions of several stone buildings of spacious dimensions are yet standing, in one of which I observed a small Saracen arch of brick. From the style in which the greater number of the houses had been erected, and the space now covered by the ruins, this had evidently been formerly a considerable place. Near the top of the hill we saw a Nubian digging among the broken walls, but when we drew near to make some inquiries, he ran away towards the mountains, though we repeatedly requested him to stop. While sitting on a stone, farther down, four or five women passed by, two of whom appeared very old and wretched; the others, who wore long loose trousers, and were otherwise well dressed, covered the lower part of their faces as they passed. They were tall large women, with light complexions, and bright black eyes, probably Arabs or natives of Derr.

For some time the banks of the river have been covered with acacias

small at the mouth, and gradually enlarging to the bottom, in which they preserve their grain. A similar practice prevails, likewise, among the rude tribes of Tartary, and in various other parts of Asia.

and thorny shrubs, from which we collected a small quantity of gum-arabic; and the reis of the boat caught some chameleons, which we intended to keep alive. They feed on flies and boiled rice, and drink water, but they do not agree together in confinement, for they bit off the tails and legs of each other. If put into water, they swell like bladders, and swim faster than they can crawl. They generally live on palm-trees, and descend in the evening to drink. We caught about thirty, but they all gradually died. I saw a female full of eggs, of the size of large peas, eighteen in number, all attached to the matrix.*

The inhabitants of Derr are supposed to be the descendants of a number of Bosnian soldiers, established in Nubia by Sultan Selim; and still in a great measure preserve their comparatively fair complexion and European features, though, in many instances it is clear, from their physiognomy they have intermarried with blacks.

While we lay moored before the town, a number of women, in the primitive style, were engaged in washing their garments on the bank of the river; they use no soap, but dipping the linen into the water, throw it dripping on the mud, where they beat it with the soles of the feet, as the women in France do with their batting-staffs. They were all exceedingly ugly, several having negro features; and in order to improve these charms, their hair, twisted into small ringlets, had been saturated with castor oil, which, melting in the sun, ran down in yellow streams over their faces. They had each a small hole in the cartilage of the right nostril, in which a little peg of wood was inserted, in the hope of one day supplying its place with a ring. Among their children there was one fair as a European, but ill-favoured as the rest. Observing us, they brought down eggs and fowls for sale; and dire was the clamour arising out of their bargaining with the Arabs. One woman in particular lifted up her hands, and shrieked so loudly, that we imagined some person must have been offering her violence, and immediately inquired into the cause of her rage. An Arab, she replied, had taken from her five eggs, and refused payment. As she seemed perfectly in earnest, we demanded and paid her the price: but this was what she calculated on; and now finding that screaming brought in money, she immediately began again shrieking more loudly than before, beating her breast in the most violent manner. However, her stratagem did not in this instance succeed, though she continued bawling and vociferating in her own language as long as we remained. They were all ornamented with necklaces of coloured glass beads, but went bare-headed, and, contrary to what we had observed on our first visit, their clothes were ragged and dirty.

In the morning several decently-dressed lads passed by our boat on their way to school, carrying in their hands the wooden tablets on which they are taught to write. These have a small open handle at one end, and are finely polished with a sort of chalk-stone from the mountains; with which, also, and with water, each lesson, when finished, is rubbed out. Having no reeds, they write with the stalk of the dhourra, which appears to make a good pen, as the characters, I observed, were well formed. One of these

* Belzoni.

little fellows, about twelve years old, accompanied by several of his companions, conducted us to the hypogeum of Derr, excavated in the face of the rocky mountain behind the town.

The town of Derr, to which we now descended, seemed by far the most agreeable place I had seen in the valley of the Nile; the houses being exceedingly well built of clay or sun-dried bricks, placed alternately in horizontal or oblique layers, giving the whole wall a pretty fanciful appearance. Herodotus observes that, to escape the mosquitoes, the ancient Egyptians were accustomed, at certain seasons of the year, to sleep on the tops of high towers; and the people of Derr may, perhaps, be actuated by the same motive in the erection of their dwellings, which, like the pigeon-houses of the Thebaid, are constructed in the form of square towers, with a large court in front, surrounded by high walls. The streets are wide and scrupulously clean. Even in the environs are none of those heaps of rubbish and filth that disfigure the Egyptian villages; but, instead, neat walled gardens, filled with orange, date, and acacia trees. Standing in the centre of spacious squares, are two magnificent sycamores, with a neat platform constructed round their trunks, where the inhabitants spread their carpets and smoke in the shade. These trees, with their massive foliage, afford a complete shelter from the sun's rays throughout the day, and the surrounding space being cleanly swept, when the labours of the day are over, the natives assemble here to enjoy their pipe and hear the news, or the wonderful narratives of the story-teller. There was no appearance of poverty; neither beggars, ragged women, or naked squalid children. The boys in the street wore neat caps, and their clothes, of unbleached white, looked remarkably clean and substantial. The women, likewise, whom we saw sitting in their shady courts, were well dressed, and wore large necklaces of various-coloured beads. Their hair was arranged in small straight ringlets, as among their neighbours the Nubians.

Not many years ago these ladies, if they desired to contemplate the reflection of their own charms, must have followed the example of Polyphemus, and had recourse to the smooth mirror of the Nile. By the aid of an European traveller, they were delivered from this state of ignorance. Their lords and masters first began the innovation of peering into a looking-glass, so that here, at least, it was the men who led the way in the vanities of the toilet. Having made a present of an article of this description to the governor of the place, the traveller proceeds to describe the effects produced by it. "Many of the people," he says, "not having visited Es Souan, had never seen a looking-glass before, and it astonished them greatly. The Kasheff was never tired of admiring his bear-like face; and all his attendants behind him strove to get a peep at their own chocolate beauty, laughing and much pleased with it. The Kasheff gave it, not without fear, to one of them, with a strict charge to be careful not to break it."*

The valley immediately south of Derr is fertile and beautiful, and covered, for the most part, with palm-trees, which, being planted in straight lines, with the branches meeting above, form stately avenues

* Belzoni.

extending from the river to the mountains. Fields of wheat and tobacco, and extensive cotton plantations, alternate with each other to the extremity of the Wady. Near the rocks dividing the territories of Derr from those of Ibrim, we found at the foot of the hills a considerable village, around which the fields seemed to be cultivated like a pleasure-garden. A sakia occurred at every hundred yards. Along the pathway were numbers of young sycamore trees, planted within a circular clay inclosure, four feet high and as many in diameter; and at intervals, among the palms, luxuriant lemon and orange trees, now bare of fruit, inclosed by similar walls. In one of the date gardens the whole surface of the ground was covered with the purple flowers of the small kidney-bean peculiar to Nubia.

Having passed the rocks in the boat, we again landed in the Wady Ibrim, where the fields seemed to be still more carefully cultivated. Our course lay over narrow neat pathways, shaded at intervals by the *kharwah*, or castor-oil shrub, and the cotton-tree, which here attains the height of twelve feet, and was now partly covered with fine large yellow flowers, and partly with the bursting fruit, hanging upon the branches like immense flakes of snow. Below, the paths were bordered with large *solanums*, bearing flowers like those of the potato, and apples yellow as gold; and the *kerkadan*, from the berries of which the Nubians prepare a sort of coffee. Among these, and yielding to none in beauty, grew the silk-tree, with its singular fruit and flowers, purple and white, rising in large clusters among the light green laniginous foliage. The water-wheels, here exceedingly numerous, are worked by one or two cows, urged forward with goads by children, in many cases not more than five or six years old, who, being placed in a secure seat behind the animals, are carried round with the wheel. Every inch of the plain appeared to be cultivated so carefully, that not a weed was anywhere to be seen; and its general aspect, contrasted with the barren surrounding rocks, seemed doubly verdant and beautiful. Mooring late on a sandy point of the shore, the serene beauty of the night invited us to land; the evening star shining most brightly, and throwing a glittering wake over the river, like the moon.

During the night it blew a gale, which, dying away before morning, left the river covered with a slight fog. The air was keen and cold. Landing early, we continued our walk among the palm groves, in the midst of which is situated the new village, or rather hamlet, of Ibrim, built after the destruction of the hill town, during the retreat of the Memlooks towards Dongola. The cleanliness of the natives is deserving of much praise; their houses being neat and comfortable, and the open spaces before the doors cleanly swept, and free from every kind of filth. This may partly arise from their comparative opulence, derived from their fertile soil, and excellent dates, the best, perhaps, in the world; but something must also be attributed to their taste for cleanliness; for the Egyptian Arabs, even when more wealthy, are, in this respect, much behind them. Being entirely independent of the governors and kasheffs, who, thanks to Mohammed Ali, dared not offer us the slightest molestation, we never visited them, unless when their aid was necessary in procuring provisions.

or arranging an affair with a guide or camel-driver. But the neatness and air of comfort observable in the kasheff of Ibrim's dwelling, induced us to step into his audience chamber, where he administers justice, and receives visitors. The apartment, spacious and lofty, was furnished with nicely matted divans, and had three unglazed windows, looking out upon the river, with handsome mat blinds on rollers.

In the grove near this hamlet we observed a species of gourd, which having climbed the stems of two or three lofty date trees, its green and white fruit hung suspended from between the branches, while the tendrils and large verdant leaves formed a kind of net-work or sheath of foliage round the trunk, like the vines trailed upon barked oaks and elms in Savoy. Throughout the Wady numbers of small watch-towers are erected at intervals in the fields, on the top of which, as the corn ripens, a man is placed with a sling and stones, as in Rajpootana, to frighten away the birds. To a building of this kind the Scripture alludes, where it says, "and he shall be left desolate, like a watch-tower in a garden;" and, at this time of the year, nothing can possibly look more desolate than one of these gray turrets, standing alone in the midst of the plain. Here I observed a striking example of the ingenuity of these rude people, who, in the harvest time, when reaping their dhourra, had left the stalks about two feet high, that they might serve as sticks to the crop of kidney-beans sown immediately on the removal of the corn.

About eleven o'clock, we reached the foot of the lofty hill, rising in one vast cliff perpendicularly from the water's edge, upon which are situated the ruined castle and tower of Ibrim—the Premnis of Strabo.

Not far to the northward is an extensive burial ground, held in great estimation by the natives, probably on account of some ancient tradition. It contains, among other tombs, those of the Memlooks, who fell some years ago in a great battle with the Pasha. The eastern bank of the river is fertile; but on the western there are no signs of cultivation. Several ancient tombs have been discovered near the mountains of Toske, at some distance inland.*

Landing at the mouth of the rocky ravine, north of the castle, we climbed between loose stones and heaps of rubbish to the top, which commands a magnificent and boundless view over the Desert; the numberless rocky valleys intervening, the meanderings of the river, the bold crags, surmounted by the tombs of Mohammedan saints, presenting themselves at once to the eye. The ruins, extending over the whole summit of the height, possess no architectural importance, though a great portion of the castle walls is evidently of ancient date. Two or three edifices, one of which had been used as a mosque by the Turks, contain several sandstone and granite shafts and capitals, which are also ancient. The capitals are of a peculiar form, square above, with a ram's head at each of the four corners, and between the heads a rose or rosette, alternating with an ornament, sometimes denominated the Maltese Cross. Two or three of these buildings have the appearance of places of Christian worship, and the high wind moaning through the ruins, recalled the day I once passed

* Col. Howard Vyse.

in the church of our Lady of Guibray. In descending from the castle towards the south, several square towers present themselves, built with small stones on the remains of the ancient wall, which would seem to be of Roman construction. Viewed on this side from the depth of the ravine, the castle, standing on scarped and inaccessible cliffs, exhibits a highly imposing appearance, and, during the prevalence of the ancient system of warfare, must have been impregnable; but artillery might easily be brought to bear upon it from the neighbouring heights. In the face of the precipice, about fifty feet above the river, are numerous small Egyptian grottoes, adorned with hieroglyphics and rude sculpture; but to reach them it is necessary to creep along the face of the rock, over a narrow ledge, in some places not exceeding two or three inches in breadth. We entered two of them, where we found in a niche the figures of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, arranged as in the large rock-temples of Nubia.

Near the village of Anké, on the eastern bank, about three leagues south of Ibrim, are two insulated masses of rock, of very remarkable appearance, the northernmost resembling a vast marquee, whose rugged sides have been torn by the tropical rains into deep gorges, between which the mountain projects its roots, like enormous buttresses, into the plain. Viewed from the north, the second seems to be the commencement of a chain. About four o'clock we passed the village of Toske, embosomed in date and mimosa groves.

From this place we saw several rocks in the plain towards the east, which resembled so many pyramids of various sizes; and I should not wonder if these suggested to the Egyptians the first idea of this form. Some of them appear to be about two hundred feet high.*

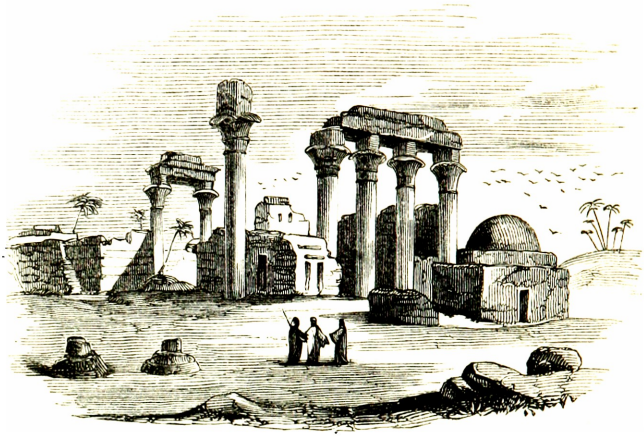
The upper part of the sakias, in some places not forty yards apart, was here surrounded by a sort of skreen of clean dhourra stalks, which looked like neat yellow cane-work; and the cultivation depending on them was carefully conducted down to the water's edge. In the midst of the dwellings of the peasantry we observed a large building, something like the moiety of a propylon, about thirty-five or forty feet in height (furnished with loop-holes for musketry, like the village fortresses of Greece and Hindûstan), to which the villagers probably retired, or transferred their most valuable property, during the incursions of the Bedouins. The aspect of the eastern bank is here eminently interesting; water-wheels, high garden walls, numerous scattered houses, and the pointed rocky pinnacles of lofty mountains, presenting themselves in succession as the traveller ascends the stream. Beyond Toske the date-trees disappear, but the mimosas and tamarisks continue; and here a chain of low hills approaches the river.

A little to the south is an island upon which are the ruins of an ancient tower, which must have commanded the whole Nile, as the river is very narrow here, and the island is situated in the centre of it. The blocks of stone are not so large as those in the temples of Egypt, but they are well connected together.*

Passing Wady Ermyné about dusk, we shortly afterwards entered Wady Foorgundy, where the night air was exceedingly keen.

* Belzoni.

Some of the Nubian boatmen, who work on this part of the river, are at once celebrated for their industrious habits and for their unceremonious



Ruined Temple.

appetites. According to the Arabs, they would eat the devil himself if he were well cooked. Without answering for the correctness of this opinion, it may with truth be said, that they live hardly, and eat anything in the world. They chew the rock-salt, or natron mixed with tobacco, putting the mixture between the front teeth and lower lip. The natron is found in several parts of Egypt, and is one of their articles of trade. The Laplanders are said to be very filthy in their food, and I am sure these people are not unlike them in that respect. When we killed a sheep, I had sometimes the pleasure of seeing the entrails opened, pieces of which, dipped once in the water, were eaten by them raw. The head and feet, with the skin, wool, hoofs, and all, were put into a pot, which is never washed, to be half-boiled, when they drank the broth, and devoured the rest. Their bread, however, is not so much amiss, and the manner in which it is baked may be worth describing. It is placed on a flat stone, eighteen inches square, raised from the ground by a small stone at each corner, so as to admit a fire under it; and when it is at a certain degree of heat, the paste is laid out, which, being quite soft, or nearly liquid, spreads in a sheet all over the stone, and in one minute is firm enough to be turned, which is done with great dexterity, without breaking it. As soon as one is baked another is placed on the stone; and they are pretty good if eaten while hot, but when cold they are quite sour and disagreeable. They are generally eaten with sour milk; but if allowed to get cold, they are broken to pieces, put into a bowl, and boiled lentils poured on them. This forms the general food of the country.*

Leaving our moorings soon after day-break, we found our hands and feet tingling with cold, as on a frosty morning in England. The course of

* Belzoni.

the river, in ascending, is here W.N.W. In this part of the Wady the sands, on the Libyan bank, descend to the edge of the stream, leaving barely sufficient space for a row of tamarisk and acacia trees. The opposite shore displays a belt of cultivation, fluctuating in breadth, until we arrive at the point where the low hills project into the river, and form the line of separation between the Wady Foorgundy and the Wady Farrek, where the sand hills on the west are partially covered with copses of tamarisks.

Manner of Crossing the Nile.

Here I saw a man paddle himself across the river on a bundle of rushes; and I was informed that two or three people often pass over together in this way.*

Beyond this point the course of the river is a little to the south of west. The north wind blowing almost a gale, we sailed at an extraordinary rapid rate, and about eleven o'clock arrived at Aboosambal, where, directly opposite the temples, there is a large cultivated island, not marked in the maps; to the east of which, in all probability, the Nile anciently flowed, leaving at the foot of the western mountains a considerable plain.

The banks of the river between Ibrim and Aboosambal are beautifully strewed with the yellow and purple acacia, forming thick hedges, which have a very pleasing effect; a species of the tamarisk is also common here. The acacia is famous for producing the gum-arabic, which is brought in great quantities from the interior of Africa, in the vicinity of Darfour; the seeds of the acacia also serve for a lucrative branch of trade, being sent in the first instance to Cairo, and then shipped for Europe, where they serve as a good article for tanning.†

The two temples of Aboosambal are excavated in the face of the precipice, the lesser about thirty-five, and the greater about fifty feet above the level of the river at low Nile. At present, the ascent from the water is difficult, the steep sandy bank being thickly covered with sedge and prickly mimosas. We landed under the smaller temple, where there is no terrace; and the pathway, skirting the rock, is much too narrow to afford a view of the façade, or the colossal figures that adorn it. But, from

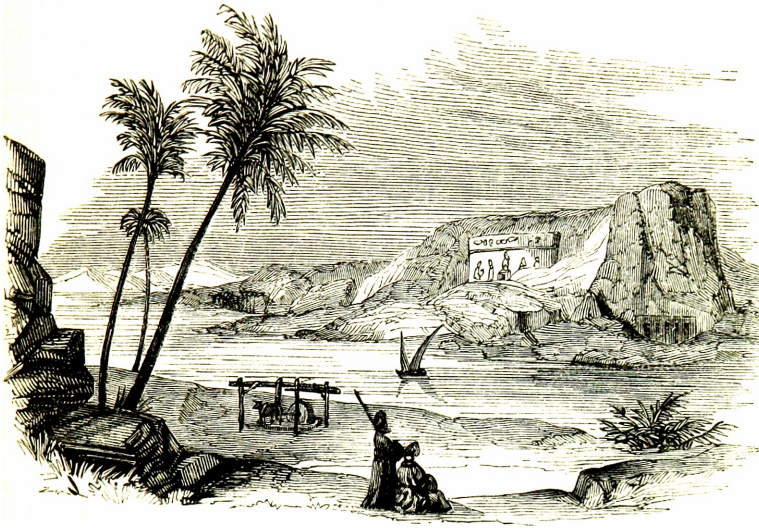
* Colonel Howard Vyse. † Irby and Mangles.

whatever point beheld, the effect is exceedingly grand. On either side of the entrance are three colossal statues of gods, standing, with one foot advanced, in an equal number of recesses, flanked by huge sloping buttresses, covered with hieroglyphics, which appear to descend from the summit of the mountain. The first of these figures, commencing from the north, represents Horus, the second Isis, the third Osiris. The goddess is distinguished by her usual mitre—the cow's horns, with the full moon between them. South of the entrance, the order in which they are placed is reversed. Burckhardt erroneously represents Isis holding the infant Horus in her arms; for the right hand hangs idly by her side, while the left, containing the handle of a sistrum now broken, is pressed upon her bosom. Her countenance, both here and elsewhere, is soft and pleasing, but possesses nothing like grandeur; and the features of the male deities are chubby and undignified. To render the spectator sensible of the gigantic proportions of these statues, the artist has placed by their sides female figures of the natural size, some dressed, and others naked; an example of bad taste, of which even Phidias was guilty when he represented his colossal Minerva bearing a diminutive figure of Victory in the hand.

The first objects which arrest attention on entering the cella, are the six massive square columns without capitals, that appear to support the roof. They are disposed in two rows, one on either side, and exhibit a kind of terminal head of Athor, surmounted by an ornament like a temple or square tower, supposed to be emblematic of the universe, of which she was the mother. Over the forehead runs a kind of full turban, which, passing behind the ears, and falling upon the neck on both sides, terminates in an involution, like the point of a ram's horn. Among the paintings on the walls the most prominent is the customary representation of a human sacrifice, executed with considerable spirit. The victim is kneeling on one knee, while his right hand rests on the other, as if in the act of raising himself; and his face, in the fierce agony of despair, or in deprecating entreaty, is turned towards the sacrificer, who, bearing at his back a quiver filled with arrows, appears from his lofty mitre, with the *uræus* in front, to be a royal personage. The hand also that grasps the kneeling man by the hair, contains something resembling a sceptre; while in the other he wields a sickle-like faulchion, with which he is about to cut his throat. Behind the royal executioner, Isis advances to save the captive, bearing a full blown lotus in one hand, while the other is extended towards the king, to stay him from his purpose; but her benevolent design is frustrated by Osiris, who suddenly presents himself, and by stretching forth a sacrificial instrument, commands the completion of the horrid rites. Some pantomime of this kind may probably have been enacted by the priests, when the blood of a human being was offered up to the manes of Osiris before his tomb.

Passing on to the southern wall, we find the usual representations of the popular gods, but with some variety in their attitudes and employment. The first group consists of a goddess, playing on a kind of musical instrument before Osiris; while a strange bird-headed divinity stands behind her in wonder, and is succeeded by Horus and Aroëris. Isis follows next,

with a new and not ungraceful addition to her mitre—a pair of wings descending behind the ears to the shoulders. Her head-dress is black, and



Temples of Abooeambal.

richly ornamented. In the right hand she bears a small frame containing a scarabæus; and in the left three lotuses springing from one stem, which she is extending towards a goddess, with a mitre in the form of a corn-measure, probably the Ceres of the Egyptians. To this group succeeds a priest, presenting the small figure of a deity squatting on his hams to Osiris, seated on his throne, with the bird-headed sceptre, the emblem of power, in his hand. On the back or western wall, left from the doorway, we find a young priestess, who, having borrowed from her patron goddess her horns, moon and mitre, approaches the throne of Isis, bearing an offering consisting of a full-blown lotus, and a small frame containing a head of Athor, surmounted by a doorway with a vine tendril on either side. Different versions of the same groups occur on the other walls of the chamber. It should be remarked that, in all these painted sculptures, the drapery of the female figures is so transparent, that the whole contour of the limbs and body is exhibited as if naked; which is not effected in the Greek manner, by imitating the folds of a robe soaked in water, the existence of a garment being merely indicated by a tippet above, and a rich border below; the remainder being, to borrow a bold figure from Petronius, a kind of "woven wind," much too fine to be visible. Among the sculptures on the northern wall, there is one which may deserve notice; an unmitred divinity on a throne, probably Phthah, grasping in both hands the crosier, flagellum, and bird-headed graduated staff, with an altar before him, piled with the limbs of various victims, (none, I believe, of men);

and on the opposite side a priest, extending a large sacrificial instrument over the reeking members. A small niche in the adytum contains a moon-mitred statue of Isis, with female-headed columns on either side. Here, according to Burckhardt, there exists a deep sepulchral excavation; but, after a careful search, we could discover no trace of it, the rock being everywhere visible on thrusting aside the loose stones.

From this hypogeum we proceeded to the greater, through what was once a rocky ravine, now filled up by the winds of the desert with a torrent of sand, constantly increasing, like an enormous glacier, which must shortly not only once more cover every trace of the excavation, but raise the valley to a level with the mountains on both sides.

This sand is of so fine a description that every particle would go through an hourglass. It is curious to observe in the morning, on its smooth surface, drifted by the night-breeze, the tracks of the snakes, lizards, and other reptiles, which had come down to the water's edge during the night to drink; and we could plainly discern the traces of their return to their solitary haunts in the desert. Sometimes their track indicated the presence of reptiles of considerable size; and with these proofs of their nocturnal movements, we easily accounted for the dread our guides expressed of walking near the water's side the night we returned from the second cataract.*

Having traversed the glen, we discover the front of the temple hewn in the face of the mountain, with the vast colossal figures, which, like the giants in the Arabian Nights, sit before it to guard the entrance. Their aspect at the first view is sublime; enormous bulk in representations of animated beings invariably producing this effect upon the mind, which, in the confusion of the moment, pauses not to examine the sources of its emotions. Of these gigantic statues there were originally four; but the third, reckoning from the north, having been shattered by a rocky avalanche descending from the mountain above, has now a large portion of his head in his lap. The three that remain entire are male figures; but whom they were intended to represent, it is not very easy to determine: perhaps Osiris, the greatest of the gods of Egypt, in whose honour the temple would appear to have been excavated. The expression of the countenance is mild and placid, but possesses little dignity, and by no means corresponds with our ideas, or resembles Athæna; nor can I conjecture what could possibly have suggested the idea to Burckhardt. The faces of the smaller colossi in the interior, which he did not see, may perhaps exhibit something more of the Pallas features; though the resemblance will not be found to hold upon examination, there being nothing of that vestal severity of aspect, that intrepid self-possession, that more than mortal pride and intellectual grandeur engrafted on surpassing loveliness, which enter into our conceptions, and exist in the genuine statues of the Athenian goddess. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to explain—except in one way—how it happened that the Egyptians never succeeded in expressing either the beauty or the austere dignity of the human form. You stand in the presence of their mightiest works of arts without a particle of awe. It never enters into your imagi-

* Irby and Mangles.

nation that those huge blocks could ever be gifted with volition, and rise from their stony seats to do you injury; some secret and obscure persuasion of which must, nevertheless, always present itself in glimpses to the mind, when it experiences that uneasy delight suggested by all objects awakening the idea of overwhelming power. To each we may apply what the poet has said of Theseus in hell,—

"Sedet, æternumque sedebit!"

The traveller may, perhaps, be astonished at their size, and astonish others also, by stating the enormous length of their beards, the breadth of their shoulders, or the more than Midas-like dimensions of their ears; but, if the contemplation of works of art has ever been numbered among his pleasures, he can never be powerfully affected by such uncouth imitations of humanity. Such, at least, after reviewing them carefully, without system or prejudice, are my impressions; which I state that others, more deeply versed in the theory and practice of the arts, may hereafter be led upon the spot to investigate the subject. The importance of the inquiry is not trifling; it is intimately connected with the question, not yet definitively decided, whether the knowledge of the principles of art were transmitted from Egypt into Greece; in properly considering which, more stress should be laid on the characteristic features, the essential difference —in one word, the souls which animated the two styles of art respectively prevailing in Egypt and Greece,—than on the vague and unweighed hints of historians and travellers.

The features of all these colossal statues display something of the square Mongol cast, with high cheek-bones; but these distinguishing traits disappear in prints and drawings; the passion for producing effect being commonly more powerful than the love of truth. They are furnished with the usual square beard, and wear upon their heads a mitre, like that sometimes attributed to Isis, from which long flaps descend over the shoulders half way down the breast. In front, above the forehead, the uræus, or cobra di capello, rears itself with inflated neck. Between the legs, and on either side of the colossi, are female figures of the natural size, coarsely executed, and with African features. These remarks apply to the two figures on the south; the others being knee-deep in sand, nothing can be predicated of their accessaries; but in all probability they exhibit no variety.

The façade of the temple, smoothed perpendicularly in the face of the rock, is one hundred and twenty feet in length, and about ninety in height; the whole of the space included within these dimensions being surrounded with a moulding, and adorned with a cornice and sculptured frieze. In a niche, over the entrance, is a hawk-headed god; but the metamorphoses, in which the Egyptian deities delight, and their habit of borrowing each other's ornaments and costume, render it impossible to decide whether it should be taken for Aroëris or Osiris. He bears, however, the globe and serpent on his head, and on either side of him, on the surface of the rock beside the niche, is a female votary, presenting as an offering the crouching image of some inferior divinity, with the symbol of eternal life on its

knees. On the frieze, surrounding the doorway, are mitred hawks, dogs, cows, serpents, with naked figures of Chemmis and Isis, and other gods, crowned with flowers; and the sides of the entrance are covered with similar representations.

Proceeding into the interior, we find ourselves in a vast hall, adorned on either hand by a row of massive square pillars, each with a gigantic statue attached to it in front. Between these lies the approach to the sanctuary and the smaller chambers within. The faces of these colossi are very fine, except the nose, which is slightly curved, too blunt at the point, and exhibiting the cartilage between the nostrils. The pupils of the eye, and the edges of the eyelids, are painted black; and the mitred helmet, descending almost to the eyebrows, conceals the whole forehead. The arms are crossed on the breast. In the left hand is the flagellum, in the right the crosier. All have nearly the same features; but the first and fourth in the southern row make the nearest approach to masculine beauty. They wear short garments, like aprons, with a row of six cobra di capellos on the lower edge. Their dimensions have been greatly exaggerated; for, exclusive of pedestal and mitre, their height does not exceed eighteen feet; including both, it may be about twenty-two. It is erroneous to describe their TURBANS as reaching to the ceiling, since they have no turbans, but a mitre, which does not rise above the columns, and is separated from the ceiling by the whole depth of the enormous stone beams, which, passing from the front to the back of the apartment, appear to support the roof. The effect they produce must depend upon the imagination of the traveller.

The designs upon the walls of this hall would seem, from a circumstance which shall presently be mentioned, to represent the wars of that Memnon, or Osymandyas, the magnificent ruins of whose palace we had seen at Abydos. They are conceived with much boldness and fire, and, although the material embodying corresponds but ill with the original idea, the narrative is conducted with ability; the rapid succession of events which compose this sanguinary drama being most distinctly unfolded. The action commences about the centre of the northern wall, where Memnon, seated on his throne, is represented in the act of giving those commands in which all this warlike movement originates. Before him are his principal satraps and great military officers, each receiving the orders and learning the part he is to perform in the coming struggle. A chariot waits in readiness for the hero of the campaign; and the grooms standing by the horses' necks have their faces turned towards the palace, as if every moment expecting to behold the warlike king issuing forth. The charioteer, likewise, in the same expectation, holds the long reins in one hand, and looks back, fearing or hoping for the sudden appearance of the monarch. Memnon, surrounded by all the pomp and circumstance of barbaric grandeur, grasps the lotus-headed sceptre in one hand, while the other is extended as in the act of speaking, but, with the pride of an oriental despot, he harangues sitting; while the great men of the kingdom who compose his auditory, stand humbly to catch the import of his royal eloquence. Behind the throne are two sumptuously attired attendants,

one of whom bears a sort of fan of feathers, mounted on a handle as long as the staff of a spear, and somewhat resembling the *sikra,* or royal fan, of the Rajpoot sovereigns of Méwar. The other, who holds the monarch's bow in his hands, seems to be seated in a chair, from which he may be supposed to be a person of some consequence.

The next scene represents the army already in the field, and the commencement of the first battle. In these wars little account appears to have been made of infantry. Chariots, with several riders in each, drawn up in long crowded lines, seem to cover a vast space of ground, wheeling about and scouring the field in all directions. The charioteer is always depicted with a large shield, apparently of wicker-work, which he extends before the combatants, whose principal arms are the bow and arrow, and the light javelin. Some of these chariots are seen falling over the edges of high cliffs, down which their riders, with the shields and arms, have been already precipitated, and are beheld tumbling among the rocks. Others, with the arrows in their hearts, are reeling in death, and falling under their own chariot wheels; while a third party, defeated and flying, drive at full speed over the plain, looking fearfully behind them, or drawing an unavailing bow at their pursuers. A little farther we behold a pause in the work of death. A parley takes place. Two personages of high rank, with circular bucklers, and round crests upon their helmets, attended by a number of followers with long tabular shields, meet in front of their respective armies. On one side an empty chariot stands behind in waiting; which, from the royal canopy, adorned with the sacred vulture with outspread wings, and the magnificent plume on the horses' heads, we know to be that of Osymandyas.

From the scenes following next in succession, we discover that the results of the parley were not pacific. On this portion of the wall, indeed, "the whole war comes out and meets the eye;" soldiers spearing men upon their knees—killing suppliants—giving no quarter; others engaged in deadly strife, or falling wounded from their chariots, or lying, the struggle ended, dead upon the ground. On a distant part of the field we observe rows of captives on their knees, while others, with their arms bound, are led away to servitude or to execution; for such were the barbarous practices of the times. Close to these wretched groups, in whom the passion for glory has been satiated, the battle in all its fury continues. Here chariot urges on chariot, and horse, horse. They throng, push, struggle, conquer, perish. Death, the true hero of the field, strides from rank to rank, and urges them with shouts and laughter to the combat. The warriors, in some chariots, cover their bodies with long shields, in others with round. Farther off, we find the infantry marching forward to battle, in serried ranks, armed with long spears, and large bucklers covering the whole body.

There is an epic variety in these representations of carnage, the eye, as it wanders along the walls, beholding at each shifting, as it were, of the scene, new images of death, new actors, surrounded with increasing terrors, paving with more sanguinary energy the way to the final catastrophe. The artist, with adulatory skill, has contrived to crowd and

multiply around the king images of confusion and slaughter. Wherever he moves, rout and perdition attend him; and, in proceeding into his presence, we pass by a soldier, apparently his armour-bearer, who is grasping an enemy by the arm, and driving a spear into his breast, while he tramples under his feet the dead body of a fallen foe. Close at hand is the king in his chariot, urging forward his fiery steed; dealing destruction with his vast arrows, driving over the wounded and the dying, his flying wheels, dyed with brains and gore, crushing out their souls. He is represented in the act of drawing his bow; the arrow, not yet sped, is richly ornamented near the barb, exactly resembling in form a small copper arrow-head which I bought at Elephantiné. The artist committed some blunder in forming this royal bow; and, having been compelled to correct his error, the yew appears double in the upper part. Here, as elsewhere, the horses of the hero's chariot are adorned with waving plumes, and the figure of a globe seems to be suspended over their necks.

The enemy, unable to resist the prowess of Memnon, retreat, and take refuge within the walls of their capital, whither the monarch, ambitious and implacable, still pursues them; and, the tediousness of a siege not suiting the purpose of the artist, the place is stormed. In their appearance and architecture, the fortifications exactly resemble the clay forts found at this day in Nubia; where the events commemorated most probably took place. Sculpture, like poetry, knows how to cast the mantle of grandeur over small things, so as to make them appear great, and the reduction of a few Nubian villages, which an enthusiastic bard would denominate "the conquest of Ethiopia," seems, in this dumb epopœa, to rival the siege of Troy. The sack of the capital is accompanied by several affecting and well-imagined circumstances. We behold on the walls soldiers who, having just cast their spears at the assailants, seem as if they had no more left. Others, who have received their death-wound, are falling back among their comrades. There are two lines of fortification, the one above the other. Just as all is lost, a woman, perhaps the Queen of Nubia, appears above upon the battlements, holding up a naked child with long streaming hair, as if to invoke the compassion of the conqueror; and near her a man, probably her husband, lifts towards heaven his supplicating hands in despair. But nothing can arrest their fate. The Egyptians burst into the castle, and we behold its gallant defenders hurled down headlong over the walls.

Victory having crowned his arms, the hero is next discovered returning in triumph to his country. He moves along in his chariot, holding the reins together, with his bow in the left hand, while in the right he bears a quiver and a crooked faulchion. Two crossed quivers adorn the side of his triumphal car. Diodorus Siculus, in describing the achievements of Memnon-Osymandyas, relates—that this hero was accompanied during his wars by a tame lion, which, running beside his horses, terrified the foe. This circumstance, whether fabulous or not, is characteristic of a barbarian, combating among rude enemies, and enables us, by a very probable conjecture, to attribute to that prince the victories here commemorated; since we observe a lion of great size running beside the horses of the conqueror.

We next find him in his own capital, in a humble attitude, on foot, leading a long procession of captives, of whom a great number are negroes, into the presence of Isis, Osiris-Ammon, and Horus. Here, we may presume, in gratitude for their supposed protection and favour, he vows to sacrifice a certain number of human victims on their altars; and, anon, he is discovered with sceptre and bow in hand, performing his vow before a statue of Osiris, grasping eleven captives by the hair, and brandishing the weapon over their heads with which he is about to shed their blood. Such are the principal bas-reliefs which adorn this great hall. My description, long as it may seem, has touched but the principal circumstances of the war; for, should I descend to minute particulars, and aim at a full account, the compass of a volume would be required.

The sides of the square pillars exhibit the sweet modest face of Isis, with the moon and horns upon her head. Into a particular description of the fourteen chambers, of which this vast hypogeum consists, it is unnecessary to enter, as they, perhaps, contain no figures or groups not met with elsewhere. A niche in the adytum contains the figures of four gods; the first, beginning on the right hand, is hawk-headed, probably Aroëris; the second, having no beard, may, perhaps, be meant for Isis; the third seems to be Osiris; and the fourth Phthah; who being, like the Grecian Vulcan, remarkable for a rude and unpromising exterior, though containing within the soul that gave birth to the arts, seems to have been often mistaken for Typhon. On the mitres worn by these divinities very curious observations have been made. The second figure, we are told, "has a casque somewhat resembling that of Minerva." But I have nowhere seen Athæna with a helmet bearing the slightest likeness to this mitre, which, with little or no variation, is found on the head of Osiris-Serapis, as judge of Amenti, in the sculptures of Thebes. Again, "the third is bearded, and has a tall head-dress, resembling the *tutulus*." Now, according to Varro, the tutulus was "the top of the hair, wound with a purple lace on the crown of the head, used only by the high priest's wife, to distinguish her from other women." The word was likewise employed, says the same author, to signify "the peak, or tuft, of a priest's cap." But the head-dress here worn by Osiris is merely the lofty mitre with two parallel compartments, commonly found on the head of Chemmis or Priapus, which in form somewhat resembles the TABLES of the LAW, represented in the hands of Moses in our old Bible engravings. The fourth statue has at present no head, which has fallen off, and is placed upon the altar in the centre of the adytum, ready for the next antiquarian spoliator who shall pass this way. In all the interior chambers the heat is intense, and accompanied, moreover, by a heavy nauseous smell, like that of a charnel-house. From the entrance to the extremity of the adytum, the whole length of the temple is about one hundred and fifty feet.

Before bidding adieu to Aboosambal, it may be worth while to give Mr. Belzoni's account of the manner in which he prevailed with the native chiefs to give him their permission to open it. Up to that time they had not learned the use of money, which the European traveller undertook to teach them. As he desired to obtain the co-operation of many of the

peasants, he made use of the usual means, and said "he would pay money to those who worked. 'What money do you mean?' inquired the Kasheff; 'money from Mohammed Ali, Pasha of Cairo? what can we do with it? we cannot buy anything here, or at Dongola.' I said, the money might be sent to Es-Souan, and there dhourra could be purchased with it. 'But,' replied Daoud, 'if we do so, they keep the money, and send us no dhourra.' I could scarcely believe that they had so little faith, or notion of commerce: but the fact is, that what produce they carry to Cairo, Siout, or Esneh, they exchange for other articles, which they send to the southern country of Nubia, and never receive any money for it.

"I produced a piastre, and showed it to some of the people, who by this time had increased in numbers all round, seated themselves in form of a crescent before us, and were staring me in the face, observing all my motions. I went on endeavouring to persuade them of the advantages they would derive from such money, if they introduced it into their country. The Kasheff, however, seemed convinced that it would do no good; for then, he observed, the people who were not contented to stay in Nubia, could sell their cows and goats, and go and live in Egypt. I believe he was right in this point; but it was certainly impolitic in him to make such a remark before his subjects. One of them took the piastre from my hand, and, after looking at it for some time, asked me who would give anything for that small piece of metal? 'Any one,' I answered, 'will give you a measure of dhourra for it, quite enough for a man to eat in three days.' 'That may be so in your country,' replied he, 'but here I am sure no one will give us six grains of dhourra for so small a bit of iron.' I told him, if he went on board our boat, and presented it to any one there, he would get for it dhourra enough to suffice him for the time I had mentioned. Off he ran like a deer, and in a few minutes returned with the dhourra folded in a rag fastened to his waist."

Another characteristic trait, connected with the history of the same operation, may be worth introducing here. "Shortly after I had dined, and performed my ablutions, the Kasheff approached, and signified his wish to speak to me in secret. We retired, and his principal interpreter was called to us. The great mystery was this: on the night before, as he stood on the bank close to our boat, he saw me drinking a coffee-cup of red liquor that I poured out of a bottle; and, having inquired what it was, was told it was *nebet* (wine). Now he had heard that the wine of the English was much better than what they made in their own country with dates; he wished, therefore, to have some to drink also, but in a secret way. Fortunately I had a few bottles left from our stock in Cairo, which we preserved for extraordinary occasions; and I sent my interpreter down to the boat to fetch one. When the wine was first poured out into a cup, and presented to the Kasheff, he sternly looked at the interpreter, and told him to drink first. The interpreter, who was a Copt, and had been in the French army for several years, did not want much persuasion to make a libation to Bacchus; so with a smile he soon convinced the Kasheff of the purity of the contents of the bottle, and the chief did not hesitate to drink the next cup. At the first taste it did not appear to him

so strong as he had supposed; but at last he found it so good, that in three days my scanty stock was nearly finished."

When this temple was opened by Mr. Belzoni and his companions, after having been closed up with sand, probably for a period of two thousand years, a toad crept out of the great entrance.* Had he been meditating there all that time on the mysteries of Egyptian theology? or was he, like the Jinneh in the Arabian Nights, who had been shut up in a bottle in the sea for almost an equal length of time, thinking all the while how he should get out?

From Aboosambal we crossed to the eastern shore, to examine the formation of the conical hills scattered in various directions over the plain: the wind blowing very high, and the Nile running and breaking in great waves like the sea. A little to the north are the deserted town and castle of Kalat-Addé, standing on an eminence inferior in elevation to that of Ibrim, but not commanded by any neighbouring height. Both the fortifications and houses seem to be still in good preservation, and to require but little to render them habitable. Behind the castle, in a low valley towards the east, is a great number of pointed clay-built tombs, the necropolis of Kalat-Addé; and about a mile to the south rises a small sugar-loafed eminence, in the smooth face of which, toward the Nile, we found two small Egyptian chapels, or niches, the larger containing a statue, now broken. On the wall is a finely-formed female figure, sitting on the ground with her feet towards the spectator, like Baillie's Eve at the Fountain; with several other bas-reliefs, and numerous hieroglyphics, but all much defaced, apparently by time. Descending from this chapel, and turning the foot of the rocky hill, we pursued the camel-track leading over the stony desert towards the south, where the mountains on the left present the most extraordinary appearance, in some places towering aloft in pyramidal masses, pointed or flattened above, in others assuming the form of ridges, terminating abruptly at both ends in precipices; their colour, alternate patches of red and black, like a heap of recent ashes. The surface of the desert, which here extends to the water's edge, is broken up by numerous torrent beds, which have torn themselves a way to the Nile through rugged strata of pebbles, sand, and rocks.

View on the Nile.

Continuing our route towards the south, we reached in about an hour the

* Irby and Mangles.

bed of a stream of lava, about half a mile in breadth, which in some places has bubbled up in semi-globular masses like pitch, and cooled in that form; in others it has spread itself over the sandstone in a thin crust, which, when struck, sounds like a metallic plate. Beyond this we found a yawning chasm extending from the roots of the mountains to the river. It was about fifty or sixty feet in depth, with perpendicular sides; and, in breadth, varying from about eight or nine to fourteen feet. The bottom is covered with sand. This vast rent was probably produced by the earthquakes attending the eruptions of the neighbouring volcanoes, which have covered the slopes of the heights and the whole surface of the desert with showers of calcined stones and black lava. Being desirous of examining the termination of this singular opening, we followed its course inward, but were frequently compelled to diverge from the direct route by deep lateral chasms, branching off from the main fissure like boughs from the trunk of a tree. On arriving at the point where the aperture enters the gorges of the mountains, and becomes shallower, we found, near its brink, a petrified tree, which had been overthrown ages ago. The knots and fibres of the wood are so admirably preserved, that to the eye many of the pieces have no appearance of a petrifaction; less so even than those specimens of agatised trunks and branches found in the Valley of the Wanderings. Near this was a mass of carbonated chips, imbedded in sandstone, and completely petrified. Of both we took away specimens; but enough remains for future travellers. A geologist would find ample scope for his researches in this spot, one of the most extraordinary in Nubia, which for its solitary position, and desolate infernal aspect, we denominated *Wady Gehenna*, or the "Valley of Hell." In many parts of the chasm, the rocks have been rent asunder in so violent a manner, that portions of them are left standing in the midst, divided all the way down from both precipices, and seemingly trembling on their bases. Night now approaching, we descended through a lateral fissure into the main opening, and climbing the rocks on the opposite side, regained the level plain, and hastened to our boat. There, sitting at the cabin door, we continued to observe the aspect of the country, and, just as the shadows were thickening into darkness, discovered what we had landed in search of,—a number of artificial mounds, like the tumuli or barrows on the plains of Troy. They are all perfectly conical, smooth, and well formed; and, from the summit of the largest, about thirty feet in height, I counted, on a subsequent visit, twenty-eight, of different dimensions, none of them very distant from the river. They probably contain bones, vases of silver or gold, arms and other articles usually interred with the dead in remote ages;* for this spot was doubtless the scene of some great battle, and these barrows the mausolea raised by the survivors over their fallen chiefs, whose actions they probably commemorated in sculpture and hieroglyphics on the walls of Aboosambal, promising them an eternity of glory, not doubting that the sacred symbols would for ever remain familiar and intelligible to the eye of learning.

The sandy plain in which they stand, disposed nearly in straight lines,

* I opened one of them across the centre to the foundation, and found it to be composed of sand and stones, without any indication of artificial construction.—Col. Howard Vyse.

is bounded to the eastward and northward by barren mountains, and isolated conical rocks, between which passes the road from Kosko to Ferraj.* The bases of the tumuli, and the whole surface of the surrounding desert, are strewed with small agates, and pebbles of various colours.

In the evening, while towing the boat, our sailors found a torpedo on the very brink of the river, apparently asleep; it was curious to observe their caution and timidity in approaching it; they, however, succeeded in sticking one of their daggers in his head, and by that means hauled it on shore; our Egyptian crew had done the same near Beni Hassan. We got the fish on board, and, though nearly dead, it sensibly affected my arm in laying hold of it; I felt a double shock up the arm near the elbow. It was about two feet long; had very small eyes; the belly and top of the back white; one dorsal fin; and the sides were coloured dark brown with black spots; it had no scales. Our sailors in Egypt ate the one they caught, but the present crew would not touch this, even when dead, and consequently harmless, much more eat it. They all said we avoided the shock by uttering a charm, or using some magic influence. This day one of the boys of our crew brought on board a chamelion; he caught it in an acacia (called in Nubia, the sant,) tree, which they affect more than the date, or any other tree in this country. On coming on board, it hissed and showed symptoms of anger, evincing at the same time a great desire to make its escape. It was then of a dirty green colour, with dark spots, and whenever it was approached it turned to a dusky brown, inflating itself at the same time. I conclude that one hue is the effect of fear, and the other of indifference. We had subsequently eight of these animals on board; some of them became so tame, that when the flies annoyed us much, we had only to take one of the chamelions in our hands, and place it near the flies, and it would catch them with its long tongue in great numbers. One of our crew brought us some fine pieces of gum-arabic which he picked off the acacia; several of the specimens were remarkably clear and large.†

It was dark when we reached Faras; but having learned that in the neighbourhood there exists a tomb, or temple, not hitherto described, we proceeded to the village in search of a guide, accompanied by Suleiman and Bakhid. Faras is situated on a lofty bank of the river, in the midst of a straggling grove of palm-trees, interspersed with patches of dhourra and lupines, and sandy mounds, which possibly conceal the remains of an ancient town. They were partly overgrown with bushes, and abounded with the recent tracks of leopards, lynxes, wolves, gazelles, &c.; ‡ its high-walled houses, and clay-built battlements, presenting by moonlight a bold and striking appearance. Here only, in Lower Nubia, the hippopotamus is still found. By day he never emerges from the Nile; but when the husbandmen are retired to rest, and a general silence prevails, he rears his huge bulk out of the water, and ascending the banks, feeds until morning among the corn-fields.§ The villagers seemed to have been

* Col. Howard Vyse. † Irby and Mangles. ‡ Col. Howard Vyse.

§ For a correct delineation of this animal, as he is found in the wilder regions of Southern Africa, I must refer the reader to Sir William Harris's "Portraits of Game and wild Animals," Plate XII. In that work, one of the most magnificent ever produced in this country, the writer gives a highly amusing and graphic account of the habits and haunts of the hippopotamus. As

long asleep, for there was no sound in the streets, or a light in any window; and we walked about for some time, knocking in vain at several doors; suspicion of our intentions, or rather motives, restraining them from answering to our call. At length, however, the pilot, apparently well known in every village from Wady Halfa to Es-Souan, found some one who recognised his voice; and in a few minutes four men came forth, offering to be our guides to the ruins.

Though the temple, hypogeum, or sepulchre, we were in quest of, is situated in the western desert, at a considerable distance from the village, our guides, having been acquainted with the neighbourhood from childhood, could have found their way to the spot blindfold. The appearance of the

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the book is unfortunately too expensive ever to get into general circulation, I am tempted to extract, for the reader's entertainment, a capital passage, describing at once the scene of the chase, and the wild and grotesque habits of the native hunters:—"No scenery could surpass in beauty that of the wood-clothed borders of the large rivers that form, towards the Tropic, the chief haunts of the hippopotami. An unbroken tier of weeping willows, clad in a soothing robe of vernal freshness, lean their fragile and trembling forms over the placid stream, as it rolls majestically along, and dipping their slender pendant branches into the water, are reflected back from the limpid mirror. Here the wreck of some stately tree rears its dilapidated head—a mouldering monument to the resistless violence of the flood, by which, during some vast inundation, it has been uptorn from its rock of ages. Beyond, clumps of airy acacias, with a countless multitude of stems, form vistas and mazes, overshadowing grassy banks, which, under a fervid and cloudless sky, are doubly refreshing to the eye. Gay flowers deck the path of the hunter as he wanders down the shady labyrinth of these delightful groves—greeted at one moment by the noisy cackling of a troop of loquacious Guinea fowls—at the next by the recent foot-prints of the lion, the rhinoceros, or the stately water-buck. Winding on amongst the grass-grown ravines, his progress is presently obstructed by a chain of yawning sepulchres, especially constructed for the empalement of the mighty river horse, and surrounded, perhaps, by the bleaching bones of some unwary victim that has recently been entrapped and eaten. That shapeless skull, despoiled of its ivory ornament, resembles a huge mass of rock—and those picked thigh-bones are like the trunks of trees newly stripped of their bark. Emerging with a snort and a splash from beneath yon belt of Babylonian willows that fringe the opposite shore, behold Behemoth suddenly cast his unwieldy circumference into the flood. Next see him warily lifting out his visual organs to steal a glance at the intruder—and then, crack! he is treated to two ounces of hard lead through his attic story. Blowing and floundering, down he pops his tiny ears again, sending a thousand bubbling circlets eddying round the spot where his fungy snout has disappeared—while the outposts and head-quarters of an encampment of clamorous baboons, are heard to challenge all down their line, as the vibrations of the echo prolong the report of the rifle along that chain of mountains which flank the river. A few seconds more, and bursting bubbles, dyed with a crimson tide, rising rapidly to the surface of the stream, attest the accuracy of the aim, and tell of the giant's death-struggles. They are presently followed by the enormously fat carcass, slimy and cylindrical, which, having been towed and floated to the bank, and hauled ashore with considerable difficulty, appears perfectly black—the colour gradually waxing fainter as it becomes dry. Now the cutting up has commenced—every knife and assagai is at work; and the barely flexible hide, fully an inch and a half in thickness, is being dragged in long stripes from off the ribs, like the planks from a ship's side. Beneath them appears a deep layer of fat, known to the epicures in the colony by the appellation of *zeekoe spec* (sea-cow's pork), and esteemed so great a rarity, that, to obtain it, the utmost influence is exerted with the traders and border-colonists. As this delicacy would at once be turned to oil by exposure to the sun, it can only be preserved by salting; for which purpose, a vat having been formed of the immoderately thick hide, the choicest morsels are laid in pickle; a number of self-invited guests, by whom the death of such a beast is esteemed the greatest of jubilees, then proceeding to help themselves liberally from the mountain of fat and lean Like a flesh market, banks and bushes are presently garnished with flaps and fids of meat, nor is anything to be seen but hacking, carving, slicing, and gnawing—whole herds of indigent and starving wanderers removing their domicile to the shambles, in order to admit of their feasting more entirely at leisure. Resembling the finest pork in flavour, the flesh is so surpassingly delicious, that none who have once partaken of a steak, can fail to unite with Burchell in recommending the English lovers of good eating not to rest until they have caused 'fine lively hippopotami' to be an article of regular importation."

desert—always interesting, always new—seemed, on this occasion, more magnificent than ever. On all sides, to the very verge of the horizon, shining sand-hills, partly covered with tamarisks and acacias, roughened the waste, whose interminable surface appeared, in the bright light of a tropical moon, to be covered with a deep fall of snow; and our footsteps falling noiselessly on the ground, likewise favoured the illusion.

> "Calm and pale—
> A phantom of the sky—the full-orb'd moon
> Hath glided into sight. The glimmering stars
> Now pierce the soft obscurity of heaven,
> In golden swarms, numerous and bright
> As insect-myriads in the sunset air." *

The splendour also of the stars and moon was indescribably beautiful, recalling to mind the matchless description in the *Iliad*, where the poet compares with the lights of the firmament the innumerable watch-fires flashing on the Trojan plain.

> "As when about the silver moon, when air is free from wind,
> And stars shine clear, to whose sweet beams high prospects, and the brows
> Of all steep hills, and pinnacles thrust up themselves for shows,
> And even the lowly valleys joy to glitter in their sight;—
> When the unmeasured firmament bursts to disclose her light,
> And all the signs in heaven are seen that glad the shepherd's heart.†

The dusky hollows, the narrow ravines, the white peaks of the sand-hills glittering in the distance, the boundless expanse of the wilderness, the beauty and absolute stillness of the night, unbroken even by the bark of a jackal, were circumstances in strict accordance with the magnificent picture of Homer.

Our guides, wrapped like Moggrebyns in white burnooses, tripped lightly before us, laughing and talking in a language of which not even my interpreter could comprehend a single syllable. The hour appeared to be a long one: valley, ravine, and plain were successively traversed; we were already far out in the Desert, and no ruin appeared. When questioned by the pilot, the Nubians replied that we had still some distance to travel. It was late: the suspicion crossed our minds that they had lost their way, in which case we might wander all night in the wilderness in the vain search of so small an object as a temple. They seemed, however, to be perfectly confident in their knowledge, never looking about them, orappearing a jot more at a loss than if they had been travelling over an English highway.

At length, after a walk of several hours, we reached a narrow sandy valley, between two low hills; and here, our guides informed us, was the temple we were in search of. On carefully scrutinising the appearance of the place, however, we could perceive neither wall nor column. It was clear, therefore, that if any structure existed, it must be subterranean; and accordingly, after a short search, we discovered in the face of the rocks, evidently smoothed by art, a small triangular opening, leading into the interior of the hill. A light was quickly struck, and while the Nubians, who had no curiosity to gratify, sat down near the entrance, we crept in, and found ourselves in the chambers of a tomb. The form and arrangements of the apartments were Egyptian, but neither hieroglyphics nor

* D. L. Richardson. † Chapman's Iliad.

sculptures were anywhere visible. In the third chamber a square deep well, of which the bottom was invisible, seemed to lead to a lower suite of apartments; but here, for a moment, our progress was stopped by a singular obstacle. Ten thousand bats, which had been sleeping quietly on the walls, roused and terrified by our lights, disengaged themselves in clouds, and flying about in all directions, struck against our face, breast, head, and hands, threatening to extinguish the tapers. On looking upwards, we saw them clinging by myriads to the roof, all in convulsive motion, with glittering eyes, open mouths, and hideous trembling wings, seeming in their fear to be hanging one to the other, tier below tier. Had they remained there, it had been well; but when we approached the mouth of the excavation, they swept so thickly through the air, ascending and descending this grave-like opening, that it was with the greatest difficulty we prevented them from striking the lights out of our hands.

In spite of their numbers, however, we contrived to lower ourselves into the well, which we found less deep than we had expected; and proceeding along the narrow passage, arrived in a sepulchral chamber, from which four passages diverged. Here we halted, being unable to determine which to select, partly because we apprehended losing ourselves in these subterraneous galleries, of unknown number and extent, and partly from the prodigious multitude of bats assailing us on every side, flapping their cold wings in our faces, or against the back of our necks. At this moment Suleiman, who was still in the chamber above, exclaimed that they had knocked out his light, and at the same time a cloud of them sweeping by us, extinguished ours also, leaving us all in total darkness in the midst of the tomb. But this by no means quieted our persecutors, who continued flitting about like swarms of bees; and not being able to direct our footsteps, we moved into the midst of the vermin, which clung and crawled over us with the most disgusting familiarity. Fortunately the attendants had brought flint and steel, so that in a short time the tapers were rekindled, and we continued our examination of the remaining chambers. The walls, roof, and doorway of one small cell towards the north was literally coated with bats, with their mouths open, their wings moving, and their bright little eyes glittering in the light of the candle.

Through a hole in the wall, about three feet from the floor, in a corner of this cell, but much too small to afford a passage, we discovered another suite of sepulchral chambers; and in one of the apartments was a mummy-pit, into which we possessed no means of descending. Having explored every other part of the sepulchre, without finding either sculpture or hieroglyphics, we returned by the way we had entered; and in the face of the hill, at a short distance towards the north, discovered the entrance into the neighbouring tomb, still more obstructed with sand than the former, though the apartments are, perhaps, of larger dimensions; several mummy-pits of great depth lead to other suites of subterraneous chambers, inaccessible without the aid of long ropes. The heat in all these apartments seemed greater than at Aboosambal, and we therefore returned with considerable pleasure, into the fresh air. Upon the face of the rock, near the entrance to the first tomb, cut in deep large letters, are the names of two Englishmen.

To the south of Faras there were remains of unburnt brick-walls, and several fragments of small columns of granite; also, some figures roughly sculptured, and others painted upon plaster, evidently of Christian workmanship, and placed there to conceal the decorations of an ancient Egyptian building. The northern side of the village did not afford anything worthy of notice; but in the adjacent heights were several ruins, apparently of churches—proofs of the former prevalence of Christianity in this country. The rocks and the tops of the neighbouring mountains bore so close a resemblance to pyramids, that I should have stopped to examine them, had I not been assured by Ignowe (an intelligent Arab who had accompanied M. Champollion in this country), that it was their natural shape.*

This morning, a calm having succeeded to the high wind of yesterday, we landed on the western bank, and rambled into the desert, which presents a very picturesque and original appearance. Here and there, over the whole surface of the plain, the sand has been raised by the wind into small hillocks, varying in shape and height; overgrown in many places with the tamarisk and silk-tree, whose entire foliage had now, by the peculiar nature of the atmosphere, been encrusted with a nitrous efflorescence, which hung upon the leaves and branches in tiny white beads, like the pearls of hoar-frost. Far in the desert we found a number of gray sandy hills, which probably owe their origin to the winds, and the growth of small creeping grasses, with whose roots their whole surface is netted. Few spots, however arid and barren, are so unvisited by the vivifying influence of warmth and moisture, as not to produce some diminutive plant, some fine moss or lichen, whose curious structure enables it to imbibe nourishment from the slightest dew. The desert has many such. In several places, indeed, it is gemmed with wild flowers, which, though small, pale, and delicate, are not without beauty. And in these sands, where the eye is not satiated with the luxuriance and splendour of a tropical flora, such unobtrusive objects please more, perhaps, for the modesty of their pretensions, and because, like ascetic virtue, the flower in the wilderness, than for their intrinsic charms.

Returning towards the river, we once more entered among the small wooded hillocks above mentioned, where we observed several ruined villages, whose destruction may probably be attributed to the incursions of the Moggrebyns. Their appearance is exceedingly desolate. The drifting sands have gradually filled up the houses, which, in a few years, they will entirely overwhelm. Separate dwellings were also seen, some inhabited, others in ruins; and there is a large village still thickly peopled, at the southern extremity of which we saw a clay-built fortress, with battlements and square towers, exactly resembling the castle stormed by the Egyptians in the bas-reliefs of Aboosambal. Our path lay over the yellow sand, where we sometimes sunk up to the ankle. Here ascending and descending among the hillocks, and emerging at intervals to the edge of the high precipitous bank of the Nile, we traversed several circular basins, surrounded by arenacious hills, which exhibit a singularly romantic aspect. Thickly covered with tamarisks, interspersed with silk-trees, doum palms, and copses of low bushes with beautiful foliage, and carpeted with grass

* Colonel Howard Vyse.

and fragrant wild flowers, they are precisely the spots the Bedouins would choose to encamp in, affording both shelter from the winds and browsing for their camels; and here, in an atmosphere perfumed by nature, enjoying the cool shade, silence, and the most perfect tranquillity, the traveller may for the moment taste the sweetness of a desert life, free from the sordid views and degrading sentiments which, in those who habitually lead it, too frequently, it is to be feared, place them upon a level with the least estimable portion of civilised society. Among the tamarisks in these beautiful hollows was a small tree of unknown species, strongly resembling them, which, when frosted with nitre, presented a perfectly blue appearance, as if it had been steeped in a solution of indigo. Here and there were the marks of recent fires, and around them heaps of the half-roasted fruit of the doum tree, which in Nubia attains a magnificent height; and being covered all the way down to the earth with leaves and branches, exhibits a rich and picturesque aspect. Several goatherds—the kindlers, no doubt, of the fires—with flocks as black as themselves, were wandering in Arcadian idleness among these woody eminences and undulating valleys; but if the exterior be an index to the contents of the inner man, their passions and schemes of life would have furnished few materials for pastoral poetry.

The channel of the Nile is in this part divided by numerous small islands, or rather sand-banks, on one of which we saw an enormous crocodile,—not less, I should imagine, than thirty feet in length,—basking in the sun. In a field covered with dhourra stubble, near one of the inhabited villages, we observed a large covey of that peculiar species of partridge mentioned by Burckhardt, which often made, he says, a welcome addition to his supper. We were less fortunate, for they all escaped. Here we passed several of the rude rope-walks of the natives, where cordage, generally of a large size, is manufactured from the leaf of the date-palm; the one end being fastened to a tree, and the other, when the workman quits his task, secured from untwisting by a strong wooden peg driven into the ground; but we were unable closely to examine the process, for whenever the ropemakers beheld us advancing towards them, they escaped across the fields, fearing, no doubt, we intended to kidnap them for the "victorious armies" of the Pasha. Both the mimosa and tamarisk flourish luxuriantly in these sands, and we noticed about the villages many which had attained an enormous size; though, the winds having half uncovered their roots, it is probable the first tempest will lay them level with the earth. There was here very little cultivation, and that little occurring in patches at intervals, on the banks of the river.

The wind at length springing up, we recommenced our voyage, soon after which it blew almost a hurricane, covering the river with vast waves, while the sands were whirled aloft many miles into the air. We, however, ascended the stream with extraordinary rapidity; but the force of the wind continuing to increase, the Arabs, after many narrow escapes, were compelled to lower the mainsail, and even with the small one the boat was more than once nearly capsizing; but no accident happened; and early in the afternoon we arrived at Wady Halfa.

The Arabs of Egypt, familiar with the tricks of camel-drivers, have

invented, and frequently act, a kind of farce, in which their arts and extortions are exposed to ridicule. It generally follows the pantomimic dances, which have already been described in speaking of the Ghawazee. The subject represented is frequently a Hajji, who, being desirous to visit Mekka, applies to a camel-driver to procure a beast for him. The driver imposes on him by not letting him see the seller of the camel, and putting a higher price on it than is really asked, giving so much less to the seller than he received from the purchaser. A camel is produced at last, made up by two men covered with a cloth, as if ready to depart for Mekka. The Hajji mounts on the camel, but finds it so bad, that he refuses to take it, and demands his money back again. A scuffle takes place, when, by chance, the seller of the camel appears, and finds that the camel in question is not that which he sold to the driver for the Hajji. Thus it turns out, that the driver was not satisfied with imposing both on the buyer and seller in the price, but had also kept the good camel for himself, and produced a bad one to the Hajji. In consequence he receives a good drubbing, and runs off. Simple as this story appears, yet it was so interesting to the audience, that it seemed as if nothing could please them better, as it taught them to be on their guard against dealers in camels, &c. This was the play; and the afterpiece represented a European traveller, who served as a sort of clown. He is in the dress of a Frank, and, on his travels, comes to the house of an Arab, who, though poor, wishes to have the appearance of being rich. Accordingly he gives orders to his wife to kill a sheep immediately. She pretends to obey; but returns in a few minutes, saying that the flock has strayed away, and it would be the loss of too much time to fetch one. The host then orders four fowls to be killed; but these cannot be caught. A third time he sends his wife for pigeons; but the pigeons are all out of their holes; and at last the traveller is treated only with sour milk and dhourra bread, the only provision in the house. This finishes the play.*

In the evening we crossed over to the island of Mainenty, where we arrived at dusk. We saw fires and people at a distance; but when we arrived we could not find any one. Their huts were left with all they had, which consisted only of dry dates, and a kind of paste made of the same, which they kept in large vases of clay baked in the sun, and covered with baskets made of palm-leaves. A baking-stove, and a mat to sleep on, were the whole of their furniture. They had pots and leathern bags to bring water from the Nile for their lands. Their settlement consisted of four men and seven women, with two or three children. They have no communication with the main land, except when the water is low, for at any other time the current, being immediately under the cataracts, is so rapid, as to render it impossible to ford it; and boats never go to these islands, seldom passing farther than Wady Halfa. They are poor, but happy, knowing nothing of the enticing luxuries of the world, and resting content with what Providence supplies as a reward of their industry. There are a few sheep and goats, which furnish them with milk all the year round; and the few spots of land they have are well cultivated,

* Belzoni.

producing a little dhourra, which forms their yearly stock of provision. The wool they spin into yarn, wind the threads round little stones, and thus suspend them to a long stick fixed in a horizontal position between two trees, to form a warp, and, by passing another thread alternately between these, fabricate a kind of coarse cloth, with which they cover the lower part of their bodies.

I visited, along with the Reis, the whole of the rock, which is about an eighth of a mile in length, and half as much in breadth. It was quite late when we found this poor but truly happy people. They had lighted a fire to make their bread, and it was this which directed us to that quarter. They were all hidden in a hole under some ruins of an old castle, which stands on the south side of the island; and when we approached them, the women set up a loud scream through fear. Our Reis, who was a native of the lower part of Nubia, could talk their language, and pacified them; yet, notwithstanding this, we could not entice more than one man out of the place. Their fear was owing to some depredations committed by the robbers of Wady Halfa a few years before, who, at low water, forded over to the island, and did all the injury that could be done to such people. We assured them that we were not like the robbers of Wady Halfa, but came only to get some one to show us the way to the cataract. At this they were more afraid than ever; and said that it never appeared that boats passed higher than Wady Halfa, which is at the beginning of the cataract, it being impossible to proceed farther, owing to the quantity of rocky islands. The Reis himself opposed my wish to ascend higher, fearing more for his boat than for our lives. At last it was concluded that the Reis should leave his son on the island as a hostage for the two men, while they came on board to show us the way up. They knew their way to the islands, for at low water they frequent them, to collect some of the earth, from which they extract a sort of saltpetre, which they use in their food. I had reasons for not remaining at night with the boat fastened to the mainland, and consequently preferred staying where we were.

There are several small islands in this part of the Nile. They are inhabited by a race of people who may be looked on as living in the most primitive state, for no one ever goes to them, nor do they ever quit their island. They are very few in number—in some of the islands not more than five or six; and they live on the produce of the few spots of ground they find on them, which they continually irrigate with the common machine, consisting only of a piece of sheep-skin and two sticks, by which they draw up the water. They have also a few sheep; and fabricate a cloth from cotton produced in the islands, in the same manner as they make that of wool.*

Landing next morning at the foot of the rocks, near the tomb of Sheikh Abdulgadir, a celebrated Mohammedan saint, we directed our course towards the south, over an alternately sandy and stony tract, along the declivity of the low chain of hills which here borders the stream.

The strata composing these hills present a very peculiar aspect, being nearly as white as chalk, and containing innumerable crystals of shining

* Belzoni.

spar. The sand, disposed in beautiful slopes, extending to the Nile, is of a rich deep yellow colour, glittering like gold. In our way we saw several gazelles, that, having been drinking at the river, or feeding near its banks, were scared at our approach, and bounded with prodigious rapidity towards the desert, appearing but for a moment, before they were lost among the hollows.

We had not proceeded far before the sound of the cataract was distinctly audible, which, in the silence of night, must be heard at a great distance. The wind blowing fiercely, and raising aloft, like mist, the fine sands of the desert, drifted them across the river, far into the eastern plain, where other sandy clouds were rolling rapidly along: but they were thin and ill-defined — nothing like those huge pillars, raised by the whirlwinds, and beheld by Bruce, driven in endless files over that self-same wilderness; the hope of beholding which had chiefly tempted me into Nubia. But they seldom appear, except, perhaps, in one particular portion of the waste; though, from what I have myself witnessed, I am led to yield the fullest belief to the traveller's sublime description.

Abousir.—Second Cataract.

In about two hours we arrived at *Abousir*, an isolated hill about two hundred feet in height,† beetling over the cataract. It is itself a striking object, and from its summit the view comprehends the whole extent of the falls. Looking towards the south, we behold the Nile, its channel being about a mile in breadth, emerging from among a chaos of rocks, as if it here sprung in all its grandeur from the earth. Flowing northward, between innumerable islands of green porphyry piled in the most fantastic forms, it at length reaches the point where the water precipitates itself, with prodigious noise and velocity, over an abrupt descent in its bed, observing no certain direction, dashed now towards one side, now towards the other, by opposing crags, vexed with whirlpools, and broken into eddies. In many parts it seems to be bursting through some enormous sluice, while fall beyond fall, covered with foam, and hurling aloft clouds of spray, present themselves in magnificent succession to the eye. Almost in the midst of these, protected by some jutting promontory, we discover smooth expanses of water, unruffled as a summer lake, affording a beautiful contrast with the savage uproar of the cataracts. Meanwhile, the roar of the dashing water is so loud, that the whole region around appears to

* Col. Howard Vyse. † Irby and Mangles.

be shaken by continual thunder. But the principal charm of the landscape consists neither in the savage rocks, nor in the eternal uproar and dashing of the waters; but in that utter solitude, sterility, desolation, which everywhere prevail, and suggest the idea, that in all that vast region you alone breathe the breath of life. This, at least, was the thought which rushed upon my mind. I looked towards the north and towards the south, towards the east and towards the west, and beheld no living thing, no habitation or trace of mankind; and heard no sound but the voice of the river roaring incessantly. I have seldom experienced, in the presence of mere brute matter, emotions more powerful. Towards the south, beyond the vast extent of the barren desert, were the kingdoms of Dóngola, and Sennaar, and Abyssinia, and the sources of the White River, upon which, circumstances compelled me to turn my back.

We wandered about for several hours among the rocks of the cataract, proceeding southward along the edge of the stream. The scene was truly wild and extraordinary; piles of dark-green or black rocks, smooth, shining, and slippery, over which it was exceedingly toilsome to climb, alternating with small hollows or smooth patches of sand, invisible at a distance, where a few bushes were nourished by a scanty supply of moisture which ran here and there in long jetties into the river. One of these leads out to the brink of the principal fall, and from its extremity, where we sat, we could have put our feet into the whirlpools. In the little hollows above described, we everywhere observed the fresh tracks of the gazelles, which would seem to come in troops, unscared by the noise of the cataract, to drink, and crop the few green herbs found growing there. Here our little party separated, each wandering as his fancy led him. I continued to advance towards the south, ascending and descending over the broken crags close to the Nile, admiring the black and green islands tufted with tamarisks, or veined with sparkling sand, and, in the midst of the troubled and rapid waters, extending north and south as far as the eye could reach. From the top of one of these eminences, I discerned on the extreme verge of the horizon, towards the south-east, the conical summit of a vast isolated mountain, and, at a considerable distance westward, another solitary cone.

I had now reached the most southern point I was to attain. I could no farther pursue the course of that mighty river, which I had followed with increasing interest for more than a thousand miles. Comparatively, a few weeks more would have carried me to its source, and those sunny regions where the rigours of winter are entirely unknown. I, however, curbed the vain longing that would have carried me, with the White River, into unknown countries, reserved for the discovery of others more fortunate. Next moment the recollection of Europe, with those whom it contained, diverted my thoughts into a different channel, and reconciled me to the descent of the Nile.

THE END.

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